

The Rise of Antichrist Pt 2

by Billy Strachan

Billy Strachan explores the biblical foundations and implications of the rise of the Antichrist as foretold in Daniel and Revelation.

Duration: 40:59

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:10, Revelation 1:14-15

Topics: "Antichrist"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of receiving the love of the truth in order to be saved. He references Second Thessalonians chapter two, which warns about the deception of Satan and the need to embrace the truth. The speaker emphasizes the significance of being faithful to Jesus and the Word of God. He also mentions the figurative description in Daniel chapter 8 of the coming of Jesus and the establishment of his kingdom, highlighting the impact of Alexander the Great and the subsequent four empires that arose. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the true nature of Jesus and the need to renounce anything that conflicts with the love of the truth.

Transcript

Now I want to go back to the Old Testament and deal a little bit with Daniel, because much of Revelation is based on Daniel. If you don't understand Daniel, there's a limit to how far you can understand Revelation. And we've got some figures here and some helpful people who are going to point out the features on the figures.

Now if you can't see this, you should be able to see one of the, what do you call them? What's the word? Yes, over, but there's a single word, what is it? Ascertain, that's right. So, gird up the loins of your mind and hold on, because we're going to go into something now. In Daniel chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream.

And when he woke up in the morning, he couldn't remember what he dreamt. And so, being a total autocrat, he sent for all his magicians, sorcerers, soothsayers, Chaldeans, and all the rest, and said, tell me my dream and the interpretation. And they all said, King that's unreasonable.

You tell us the dream, we'll tell you the interpretation. He said, no, I want you to tell me the dream and the interpretation. If you don't, you'll all be executed.

So, they sent out the executioner to start executing, and they came to Daniel. And Daniel said, why so hasty? Give me time and I'll tell the king his dream and the interpretation. And he prayed, and God showed Daniel in a night vision, what he was praying for.

So, this is what Daniel says to the king. In Daniel 2, verse 31 and following. You, O king, were watching, and behold a great image.

This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you, and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron, and partly of clay. I think we may read on a little further.

You watched, while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors. The wind carried them away, so that no trace of them was found.

And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. That is a figurative description of the coming of Jesus, and the establishment of His kingdom. But when it comes, the stone cut without hand, the first thing it does is fall on the feet of the image.

And as a result the whole image is disintegrated totally, and just disappears like chaff. Now that's God's estimate of Gentile power, that's not based on God's authority. And really it's, it's almost comical how God expresses His view.

Because first of all, it was an image, it was not reality. Second, it was in a dream, not reality. Third, the person who had the dream couldn't remember his dream.

Fourth, the progress was from the head down to the feet. And it was always a less valuable metal than the previous one. It was from gold, to silver, to bronze, to iron, to clay.

That's God's estimate of the Gentile nations, and their history. We hear a lot about evolution, and doubtless it applies in some places. But people neglect the fact that there is also devolution.

And this very clearly depicts the devolution of humanity, and of its temporal power. Always going down, always less valuable, and ultimately dissipated so that nothing is left of it. Now let's consider the significance of the parts of the image.

So you will point while I talk. The head is interpreted, very simply, it's Babylon, represented by Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon was succeeded in the history of the Middle East by Medo-Persia, which is the silver chest and arms.

And it's interesting, there were two arms signifying that there were two elements to Medo-Persia. There was the Medes, and the Persians. The next empire that followed was Greece, brought into being by Alexander the Great.

And it is represented by the belly and thighs of bronze. And it's interesting to me, I just observed this, that the belly and thighs represent the reproductive area. And out of all those four empires, the one that has been reproductive, spiritually, is Greece.

Greece is the source of democracy. It's the source of humanism. It's the source of all Western philosophy, of which I was a student.

It's the source of relativity. The first Greek philosopher, of whom we have any record, named Protagoras, said certain very simple things. He said, man is the measure of all things.

That's humanism. Exactly. He said, you cannot step twice into the same river, because the second time the water will be different.

He presented a totally relativistic picture of reality. And if you look at the culture of the Western world, the European nations, including Britain, they really are dictated largely by Greece. You have a slightly different form of education from what I went through.

But when I went to school, I started learning Latin at the age of 9 and Greek at the age of 10. By the age of 12, I was expected to be able to write verse in Greek and Latin. And the schools I attended were, to a certain extent, Christian.

But the final authority was Greece. It wasn't stated that way, but the most important thing was to be able to quote Greek, to know the Greek poets and the Greek philosophers. And our culture was molded on that.

And when I met Jesus, one of the things I had to do was renounce my whole involvement with Greek culture and philosophy. So this is just an illustration of how exact the Word of God is. In fact, I would say that Britain has got to be delivered from the slavery to the classics before it will have a real revival.

When I first brought Ruth to Britain after we were married, I wanted to show her England and London. And I took her around to Buckingham Palace and all those places. And she was just shocked by the fact that everything was filled with idols, images, Greek statues.

And I'd been so used to it, it didn't occur to me. But I suddenly realized this is the dominating spiritual influence in Britain. All right, we come to the legs of iron, the fourth Empire, which is Rome.

That's, I mean, this interpretation is agreed by almost all Bible commentators. Now, like the arms, the legs are two. So this warns us that there's going to be some kind of division.

And this is very significant because of its interpretation. So the Roman Empire came into being as one. But in the fourth century, it was split into two.

Western Empire and Eastern Empire. In the time of Constantine, the capital of the Western Empire was Rome. The capital of the Eastern Empire was Constantinople.

So you have the two legs. Now on the two legs are the toes. Everybody understands that.

And any normal figure doesn't have nine toes on one foot and one toe on the other. It has five toes on one foot and five on the other. So now, let's look at the next picture, if we can.

Do you recognize that? I hope you can. That's basically Southern Europe. And you see those two legs coming down with the feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

Incidentally my appreciation to the person who made these. The right legs, toes are on Rome. The left legs, toes are on Constantinople.

Now, if this is accurate and there are to be ten kings and a confederation of ten kings. At the present time a lot of people are excited about the European community and think this is going to be it. But I say that's impossible because you don't have nine toes on one leg and one toe on the other leg.

Furthermore there are a lot more than ten nations now part of the European community. I think the European community is a picture of the way things are going to go. But it's certainly not the ultimate.

So let's consider and now I'm giving you inferences. They're not necessarily statements of doctrine. They may not work out exactly as I suggest.

They're not intended to tell you the final truth. They're intended to get you thinking along a certain line so that from now on you'll be able to assess things for yourself in the light of Scripture. So if we have five toes on the right leg.

That is the eastern half of the Roman Empire. We have to ask ourselves what five nations might be there. And this is merely a might.

But my answer is Spain, France, Germany, Italy and if there's one more it could easily be Austria. Now one thing to bear in mind about those nations is that they are all by background Roman Catholic and they are all imperial nations. Every one of them has had an empire.

And my comment is the leopard will not change its spots. Ultimately those will be the decisive factors in the conduct of those nations. Now we go to the eastern half, the left leg and we have possibly Greece.

Let's have a look. Where do we go? Turkey, Syria, query Israel, Palestine or whatever and Egypt. Now again this is merely a possibility.

But it meets the requirements because we have five toes on each foot. Furthermore the ultimate battleground, the final place where things are going to work out is not Europe. It's the Middle East.

And the Middle East has to be involved. So that's just a way of thinking. Okay.

I'm not by any means claiming it'll work out exactly that way. But I do think it's much more probable than any theory that says it will grow out of the European community. See we're all tend to be self-centered and we are more or less Europeans.

And so we tend to think it all revolves around us. But the truth of the matter is the one area of the world which plays the major part in biblical revelation is the Middle East. And it's got to be the place where the focus ends.

Now you say how could all this come about? I don't know and I personally believe we are continually talking about a world government. President Bush has unfortunately set his sights on that target. I want to say I don't believe in his new world order and I don't want it.

That's my personal reaction. And I don't believe, this is my opinion, that anybody will be able to bring bring about a world government except the Antichrist. It'll take him.

Meanwhile we have how many years we don't know left in which we are still free to some measure to operate and do what God has called us to do. Now if we're to have a confederation that extends from Spain to Egypt the unifying force will probably have to be religion. And there are three religions that could

do it in combination.

That's Judaism, Christianity and Islam. And they all have much in common. There's really only one obstacle to some kind of world religion emerging out of them.

Just one obstacle. It's that awkward historical character named Jesus. Because Jesus said I am the way, the truth, the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. So if Antichrist is to bring this order into being, what does he have to do first? Get Jesus out of the way. And he is working assiduously at that day and night.

And we have situations now in which the Queen herself as the head of the Anglican Church has attended a service in an Anglican building where worship was offered by Hindus and Muslims and others. The Pope has attended similar ceremonies. What does it all tell us? In the last resort if Jesus is an obstacle get him out of the way.

And then we'll have unity. We'll have one world. We can have a one world government.

I'm afraid it's going to happen. I don't want it. But I think it will happen because I think God has said it will happen.

Now all this is in a sense theory. Not all of it but some of it. And I don't want to impose my opinions on you.

All I want to do is to stimulate you to think in a certain direction. Now in Daniel chapter 8 we have a prophecy about two of the empires. And we don't have time to go into it in detail.

But there is a ram which is Persia and a goat which is Greece. And that's so typical of both nations because it's it's a characteristic animal. Now all this was opened up by Alexander the Great.

He was the one that broke through and changed the whole world system. And out of Alexander there came four lesser empires. Maybe we better should read that in Daniel chapter 8 if I can find it quickly enough.

Yes in Daniel 8 verse 8. Therefore the male goat, that's Greece, grew very great. But when he became strong the large horn, that's Alexander, was broken. And in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

But they did not have the same power as Alexander. Now I think history makes clear what the four empires were. Number one Macedon which is northern Greece under Antigonus.

Number two Pergamon in Turkey under the Adalids. Number three Syria under the Seleucids. And number four Egypt under the Ptolemies.

Now in Daniel 8 verses 9 and 11 it tells us the Antichrist is going to arise out of one of these empires in the end time. Much of the purpose of Daniel 7 and 8 is to tell us about the Antichrist. But in each case it gives us a historical background and a geographical background against which we can assess the information.

So it says in Daniel 8 verses 9 through 11. Out of one of them, that's these four, as they called in Greek diadochi, the successors to Alexander. Out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east and toward the glorious land.

And it grew up to the host of heaven and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the prince of the host, etc. Now this is the Antichrist who eventually sets himself on the level of Jesus.

But it came out of one of the four empires. Now which one? It says in Daniel 8 verses 9 that it became exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east and toward the glorious land. If it developed toward those it didn't develop out of them.

Are you with me? So where would we look for it? The south is Egypt, the east is Syria and the glorious land is the land of Israel. Can you point those out? Thank you. Point out, wait a minute, where are we? Egypt, Syria, see that's the south east corner of the Mediterranean.

Now what's the nearest place from which the power could arise? The answer is Turkey and I personally believe that's where it will, where it will settle. I'm not saying it will arise out of Turkey but it will be located in Turkey and it will be located in one particular town which is Pergamum. I'm sorry a lot of you have not even heard of Pergamum but it's one of the cities of the seven churches in the book of Asia, in the book of Revelation.

Thank you. The seven churches in Asia. And if it were to arrive in Pergamum which we'll look at in a moment it would say that Revelation 7 verse 20 says the truth about the ten horns that were on its head, that's the ten we've looked at, the toes and the kings, and about the other horn which came up before which three fell.

Now that's the antichrist, the little horn. Before it three of the original horns fell. Now if my suggestion is correct the three horns that would fall would be Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.

And we would have a some kind of political power that dominates the whole of the east end of the Mediterranean which is where all the final action is going to take place. Bear that in mind. Now, Revelation 2 verse 13, be patient with me we're getting near the end.

Revelation 2 verse 13 says to the church of Pergamum, Jesus speaks and he says in Revelation 2 verse 13, I know your works and where you dwell where Satan's throne is. So where is Satan's throne located? In Pergamum. Alright now, in Revelation 13 and verse 2 it says, Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion.

And the dragon, that's Satan, gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. Where was his throne? Pergamum. Now Pergamum is an interesting place.

In the period before Jesus, in the last two or three centuries, it became a quite significant city. It almost rivaled Alexandria. And it was the center of certain things.

It was the center of the worship of Zeus. Zeus, you know, is the god of the, quote, gods, the father of the gods of the Greco-Roman culture. Zeus in Greek, Jupiter in Latin.

Now I believe, and I'm sure many of you would agree with me, those pagan gods are none other than the principalities and powers of which Paul and others speak. They are the satanic rulers in the heavenlies that seek to dominate the earth. And of those, the leader was Zeus.

So in Pergamum, there was a temple of Zeus which had an altar, which was, I think, a hundred and forty feet long. A hundred feet wide and forty feet high. And it had a tremendous carved frieze illustrating the battle of the gods and the giants, all from Greek mythology.

Now in the end of the nineteenth century, German archaeologists excavated it, took it apart, took it to Berlin and rebuilt it. And it is now located in a museum in Berlin. Now I understand this.

It's hard to prove it. When the Russians moved into Berlin, they made an exact copy of this altar and exported it to Moscow. And it plays some significant role, or did play some significant role, in the various ceremonies of the Communist Party.

But it is really the altar of Satan. Now the people of Bergama, which is the modern form of Pergamum, are agitating to have that altar returned, because they say it really belongs to us, the Germans shouldn't have taken it. Now another feature about Pergamum was that it was the center of the worship of the god Aesculapius, who was the Greek god of healing.

And out of the worship of Aesculapius, there developed the worship of the Roman Emperor. Emperor worship. And in the evolution of history, first of all, the Roman Empire was considered to have become a god after he had died.

Then he was received as a god while he was still alive. So the ruler of the empire became acknowledged as god. In other words, the whole spiritual process for the raising up of the Antichrist has already been worked out in this particular setup.

Now I am not saying that's the way it will happen. But I'm saying, as far as I understand, it's in line with the situation and with the predictions of the Bible. Time will show whether it's, how far it's correct.

But I trust that I have been able to persuade you that it's all very real. It's very relevant. It's not remote.

It's not from another age. It's right here and now that these things are happening. And they concern us.

And we need to know how to respond to what Satan is planning. And we have to bear in mind that for a period of at least three and a half years, God is going to permit the Antichrist to have his way. Does your theology make room for that? If not, I think you need to adjust your theology.

Because otherwise you're going to be overtaken with a situation for which you're totally unprepared. I'm not suggesting by any means that Antichrist will ever triumph or Satan will ever triumph. But I do believe there'll be a period, and I believe it's the same period that's called in Matthew 24, the great tribulation that is ahead.

Now I know some Christians believe we'll go out before the tribulation. Some people believe we'll go out in the middle of the tribulation. Some people believe we'll go out at the end.

I think it's important that we are prepared for whatever lies ahead without making up our minds in advance exactly how it's going to work out. But my fear is that the majority of the Christians that I move amongst and deal with today, if this were all to happen tomorrow, would be totally unprepared. Peter said to the Christians, arm yourselves with the same mind.

As Jesus suffered, you're going to suffer. So if you have that mindset, you're armed, you'll survive. But if you go out into the conflict without that mindset, you're going out unarmed.

I'm not a gloomy person. I believe in the total victory of Jesus. But I believe there's things that have to happen.

And many of them have to happen in the church, because the church is far from ready for its divine destiny. And one of the things, this is subjective, but Jesus spoke to us recently, Ruth and me. He said he wants a church with muscles, not flabby, not overweight.

The Africans here would appreciate this. When I was a principal of a college for training African teachers in Kenya, I was walking along one day with one of my students, and I didn't give him any notice. I simply said, what kind of a girl would you like to marry? And he didn't miss a step.

He didn't stop for a moment to pause. He said, she must be brown and muscular. Well, I don't know about the church being brown, but I think she has to be muscular.

There's one beautiful picture of the church in the Old Testament. It's in Genesis 24. It's Rebecca, who was the chosen bride.

It's a beautiful parable. But when Rebecca came along, and Jacob was standing there, you know what she did? She drew enough water for all 10 camels. And a camel can drink 40 gallons of water.

So she drew 40, 400 gallons of water. Don't tell me she wasn't muscular. All right, how are we going to be sure that we make it through? I want to return and close with this.

2nd Thessalonians, chapter 2. Satan will work, verse 10, with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them strong delusion. There is only one guarantee of safety.

It is to receive the love of the truth. God is offering the love of the truth. The question is, will you receive it? Will you commit yourself to be faithful to Jesus, who is the truth? And to the Word of God, which is the truth.

And don't believe in an unscriptural Jesus. I think I must turn to this. I didn't intend to.

But in 2nd Corinthians 11, Paul writes in verse 2, to the church. 2nd Corinthians 11, verse 2, For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Now in the culture of those days, betrothal was not marriage. But it was as binding as marriage. And it was the step to marriage.

And a woman who was unfaithful in the time of betrothal, was treated like an adulteress. And I, I think it's a wonderful testament of what the blood of Jesus can do. That Paul could speak about the church at Corinth as a chaste virgin.

When you think of their background, they were pimps, prostitutes, drunkens, extortioners, liars, thieves. But the blood of Jesus could produce out of them, a bride who would be a chaste virgin. Isn't that something? But Paul says, I fear, somehow, as the servant deceived Eve by his craftiness.

So your minds may be corrupted from the purity and simplicity that is in Christ. I tell you, I fear for that. Basically the gospel is a pure, simple message.

I may not be able to communicate it that way, but that's the way it is. I am afraid of too much theology. Actually the theological, what do they call the things, seminaries, are the main breeding ground of unbelief in the church today.

That's a simple statement of fact. It's not true of them all. I'm afraid that you're going to be corrupted from the purity and simplicity of your faith in Jesus Christ.

Now Paul says, for if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it. You see the issue is, is it the real Jesus? Because if you believe in another Jesus, then you receive a different gospel and a different spirit. Now there are many versions of another Jesus being peddled in the church today.

One is a Marxist revolutionary. That's what's called liberation theology. It sweeps much of South America, including the Catholics.

Another is a talented guru, on a level with Buddha and others. I want to tell you Jesus is no guru. He's the son of God and the creator of the universe.

And if you think of him in terms of a guru, you have no concept whatever of who he is. You are receiving another gospel and you'll be open to a different spirit. And then there's the vision of Jesus as a kind of Father Christmas.

Who walks around packing people on the head and saying, there, there, don't worry, it'll be alright. Jesus has eyes like a flame of fire and a sharp two-edged sword goes out of his mouth. And although John had known him intimately in the days of his flesh, when John met the resurrected Jesus in the opening chapter of Revelation, he fell at his feet as one dead.

That's the Christ that we serve and that we worship. So let's make up our minds to receive the love of the truth and to renounce anything that conflicts. I don't want to.

I should stop. But I have to say God spoke to Ruth and me and I'm, you're open to judge this. And he said you can only have fellowship with those who have the love of the truth.

And I understand that because otherwise we're playing games. And fellowship is very open, very sincere, very frank. But it demands the love of the truth.

So how are we going to end? Have to do something. I don't want to make it too easy. That's the problem.

I could, I could say if you want to receive the love of the truth, stand and then we'll pray. But I don't think that you can do it that easily. I've confessed to you honestly, I don't know how to close this message.

Well, I think I, we owe it to you to pray for you. And I'm not going to ask you to make any response because I've seen that's an easy way out. You call people forward, they pray, they shed a few tears and they walk away no different from what they were.

Some of you need to be very different people from what you are. And we cannot change you. But we can pray for you.

Brothers and sisters, those of you who are behind me, come and pray for these dear wonderful people of God.

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