

Revelation 13:1-10—The Antichrist—Part 1

Today we come to Revelation chapter 13, where we are introduced to the antichrist. He is one of the most prominent and influential actors in this final 7 years of human government.

But, before we start, we are going to take a step back and get the big picture. I would like to go through some reasons why it is important to study prophecy, especially concerning the second coming of Christ. Here are some reasons for you to consider why it is important to be well grounded in your understanding of prophecy:

Reasons to study prophecy/second coming:

- 1. Jesus said that we should seek to understand end time events*
- 2. 1/3 of all Scripture is prophecy*
- 3. We are blessed if we do*
- 4. It is very relevant for today*
- 5. So we won't be deceived*
- 6. Assurance for the future*
- 7. Opportunity to share the gospel*
- 8. Make conversion easier for unbelieving church members who go into the tribulation*

1. Jesus said that we should seek to understand end times events:

Jesus said in Matthew 24:15 regarding the tribulation and the book of Daniel, "Whoever reads, let him understand."

Jesus said to the Jews in Luke 19:44 that they would be judged, "because you did not know the time of your visitation." The Jews missed the first coming of Christ, even though it was predicted to the very day and there were many other fulfilled prophecies. They paid a high price — Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple burned down and the people scattered all over the world.

2. About 1/3 of the bible is prophecy:

To neglect prophecy is to neglect 1/3 of the bible — and that is wrong. Why?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Remember that the word "all" means all. If we are to be complete, meaning capable or proficient in our role as ambassadors for Christ, then we need to study the entire bible, and that includes prophecy.

3. We are blessed if we do:

Revelation 1:3 NKJV

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

The only book of the bible that promises a blessing if it is read aloud in the church is the book of Revelation.

4. **It is relevant for our generation:**

We are living in the last days—the final years or months or days before the rapture. Revelation 1:3 tells us that “the time is near.”

Therefore, it's worth keeping up with current events to see that the labour pains of the second coming of Christ are increasing in both speed and intensity—earthquakes, natural disasters, wars, rumours of wars, pestilence, moral decline, Israel becoming a nation, the alignment of the nations in the middle east, the crumbling of national sovereignty in western nations, the moving towards a one world government and economic system, and even steps toward a one world religion.

5. **So we will not be deceived**—this is really important:

Matthew 24:4-5 NKJV

And Jesus answered and said to them: “**Take heed that no one deceives you.**
5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

There are many other references that exhort us to not be deceived. There are many people in cults who would not be deceived if only they had a good understanding of prophecy. Then they could avoid these false religions and false teachings and not be held in bondage. A good example is those who believe that Jesus was supposed to come back in 1844. I'll give just one example that most people are familiar with:

Here's a quote from *Brittanica* regarding the Jehovah's witnesses:

The Adventist movement emerged in the 1830s around the predictions of William Miller, who proclaimed that Jesus Christ would return in 1843 or 1844. When Christ did not return as Miller prophesied, Adventists divided into a number of factions (One of these is the Jehovah's Witnesses). During the 1870s, Charles Taze Russell established himself as an independent and controversial Adventist teacher. He rejected belief in hell as a place of eternal torment and adopted a non-Trinitarian theology that denied the divinity of Jesus.

He also interpreted the Second Coming in accordance with the literal translation of the original Greek term, *parousia* (“presence”), suggesting that Christ would come as an invisible presence and that the Parousia, or “Millennial Dawn,” already had occurred, in 1874. The coming of Christ's invisible presence signalled the end of the current order of society and would be followed by his visible presence and the establishment of the millennial kingdom on earth in 1914. Although the kingdom did not come, Russell's teachings motivated a number of volunteers to circulate his many books and pamphlets and a periodical, *The Watchtower*, and to recalculate the time of the Parousia.

Did you notice some of the errors regarding prophecy—Jesus return not being physical, the Millennium beginning in 1914 etc.

There are other groups like the SDA's with similar beliefs who share some of the common roots or core beliefs as the Jehovah's Witnesses do. Once again, I'll read the scripture:

Matthew 24:4-5 NKJV

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

There have been many millions deceived by faulty or heretical beliefs regarding end times teaching or doctrine. Listen to the words Jesus said: "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and **will** deceive many. Do you notice that those who are deceived in modern times continue to give their lives to promote the lie, just like they did in Charles Taze Russell's day? These are wasted lives, deceived lives, often lives spent trying to convince people who love Jesus to fall away.

Another example of bad doctrine leading to bad or foolish behaviour we recently covered is that an allegorical interpretation of prophecy leads to the false doctrine called "replacement theology". This teaching was and still is used to justify hatred towards the Jews.

So, I do hope that you can see that Christians need to be well versed on prophecy, in particular prophecy regarding the second coming of Christ, so that they are not deceived. The second coming of Christ includes the Rapture, the tribulation, and then the Millennial reign of Jesus.

6. We have assurance for the future:

Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 tells us that a good understanding of end times events will result in us having "an eternal comfort and a wonderful hope". Instead of the sin, evil, and madness that we see around us causing us to panic and despair, we can look ahead to what will happen, and see that the current events are actually lining up with events prophesied to happen during the tribulation. E.g. cashless society, one world government, one world religion, one world economy.

Luke 21:28 NKJV

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

7. We have an opportunity to share the gospel:

Some people say, "Since the church, the believers, will be caught up to meet Christ in the air, and will not be a part of the 7 year tribulation, then why bother learning about it. Why not just be content to know that we will be caught up before all the really bad stuff happens?" Well, if we take that attitude, then we will miss the signs of the second coming of Christ, and we will miss out on opportunities to tell others about the amazing number of fulfilled prophecies that have occurred in our own generation. Worst of all, we will have failed to warn people that judgement is near. It is our duty as ambassadors of Christ to point people to the fulfilled prophecies, especially in our own times, and help them to see that the Bible is true.

1 Peter 3:15 NKJV

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence [or reason] to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

Given that we are living in the last days, it makes sense that we should know what is going on and use that knowledge to convince others that the Bible is true so that they can see their need for the Saviour.

8. **We have an opportunity to inform people in church who are unsaved who will go into the Tribulation:**

Scripture is clear that not everyone in the church is saved. Those in the church who are not saved, and end up going into the tribulation, will be much better prepared and able to make the right choices during that time. It could be the difference between life and death for them. If we tell them what will happen, but they refuse to repent and believe in Jesus now, hopefully they will change their minds when they see all these things coming true, that they will start to take the Bible seriously.

Antisemitism—The Ancient Hatred—the Arabs

Previously we finished going through Revelation 12 where we looked at antisemitism, the hatred of the Jews, and how at its core, it is inspired by Satan himself in his attempt to destroy and disrupt God's plan of salvation. We looked at one of the sources, which was the church, and the false doctrine called "replacement theology." However, I need to mention that there is another significant source of antisemitism—it is called "the ancient hatred."

It all started back in Abraham's day. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac was the promised child, the one whom God had chosen, the one to whom the promises would be transferred to, the one whom the Messiah would come through. Despite this, Abraham also prayed for Ishmael, that he would be blessed, and he was. Ishmael became a great nation, God protected and provided for both him and his mother in the wilderness by showing them water—but it was not enough. Thus, the Arabs (those descended from Ishmael) have hated the Israelites or Jews (the sons of Abraham Isaac and Jacob) ever since. When Muhammad came along much later in the 6th century A.D., all he did was systematise and sanctify or justify the ancient hatred that had been present all along and make it a part of the religion of Islam. So if you have ever wondered why almost everyone in the middle east seems to hate Israel, now you know.

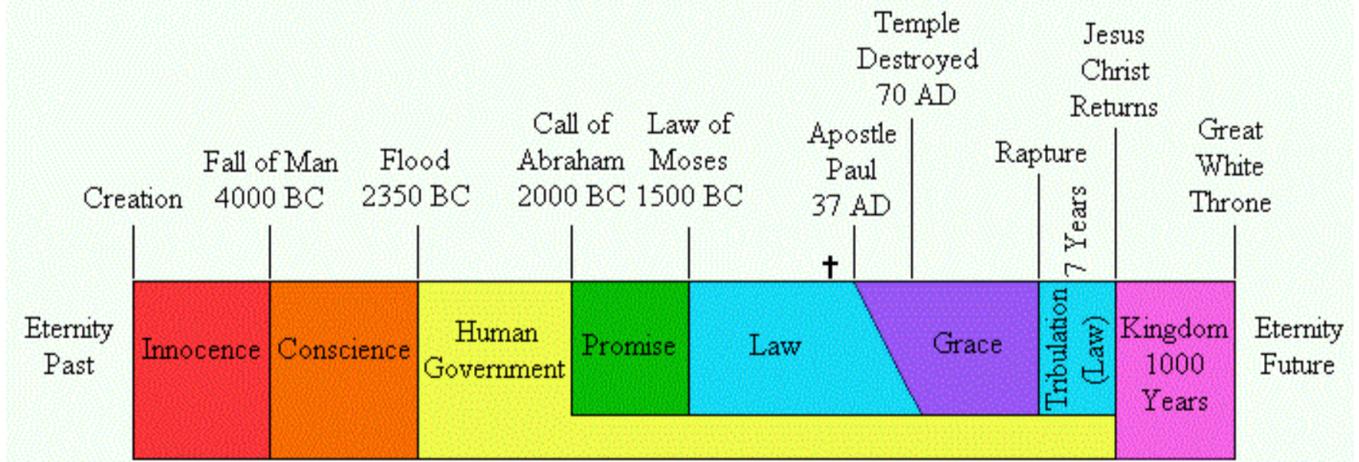
Who is the Antichrist?

As I said, today we come to Revelation chapter 13, where we are introduced to the antichrist. If you ask most people, they will tell you that they have heard about an antichrist, but really have no idea about who he is, what he does, or when he comes.

So let's start with a simple question, something that we already know, and something that will give us a framework to help us put all the puzzle pieces together as we learn more today. The question is, "when does the antichrist rule the world?" Answer—he rises to power in the first half of the seven year Tribulation, and then rules as the ultimate totalitarian dictator for the last half of the tribulation, that is 3 1/2 years.

Have a look at the dispensation chart below. Find the 7 year tribulation period, and then understand that it is broken into two halves—The Tribulation (first half) then the Great Tribulation (last half).

Dispensations of the Bible



To help us in our study of Revelation 13:1-10, which describes the antichrist, it's helpful to look at what other places in the bible tell us about the beast, the antichrist, the man of lawlessness, the man of sin or the prince of the people who is to come, as he is otherwise referred to in the bible. The two passages we will look at are 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and 15-17 and Daniel chapter 7. Both describe the antichrist.

What does 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, 15-17 tell us about the antichrist?

Today we will only look at 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and 15-17. I'll read it through once, and then the second time I'll be asking questions or explaining things about the parts that are in bold:

The context of 2 Thessalonians 2 is that the believers in the church of Thessalonica had been told by some false teachers that the tribulation had already begun, which meant that they thought that they had missed the rapture. They were shaken and alarmed.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and 15-17 NLT paraphrase

Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ [second coming] and how we will be gathered to meet him [Rapture].
² Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord [Tribulation] has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. ³ Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day [the 7 year Tribulation] will not come until there is a great rebellion against God [in the church] and the man of lawlessness [the antichrist] is revealed—the one who brings destruction. ⁴ He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God [Abomination of Desolation—Daniel 9:27].

⁵ Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you? ⁶ And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. ⁷ For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way [the Holy Spirit working through the church]. ⁸ Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendour of his coming [The end of the Tribulation].

⁹ This man [the antichrist] will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. ¹⁰ He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way

to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.

¹¹ So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies.

¹² Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.

¹⁵With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter.

¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, ¹⁷ comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.

Again, the context of 2 Thessalonians 2 is that the believers in the church of Thessalonica had been told by some false teachers that the tribulation had already begun, which meant that they thought that they had missed the Rapture, or that prophecy had failed—a bad result either way. Remember that the rapture comes before the 7 year tribulation period—the church does not go into the 7 year tribulation period. The result of this false teaching was that the faith of these believers was badly shaken. So Paul reminds them of what he previously taught them about end times prophecy, especially the sequence of events. *His main point is that the church must be removed before the antichrist can be revealed, and that the tribulation only begins when the antichrist is revealed (when he signs the 7 year peace treaty).*

Sequence of events for the start of the tribulation.

1. Rapture happens, the church is caught up to meet Jesus in the air and goes on to Heaven.
2. A short time later the antichrist is revealed when he confirms the peace treaty with Israel.
3. The tribulation begins when the peace treaty is confirmed by the antichrist.

Therefore, put simply, the tribulation could not yet have started because the church was still on the earth. Another way of stating it is, “as long as the church is still here, the antichrist can’t be revealed, and therefore the 7 year tribulation can’t begin.” Again, as long as the church is still on the earth, the tribulation is still future, because the rapture happens first. Make sense?

Now we’ll go through it again, and you tell me what the parts in bold mean.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and 15-17 NLT paraphrase (*my comments are in parentheses*)
Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** (*Jesus physical second coming*) and **how we will be gathered to meet him** (*the rapture*). ² Don’t be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that **the day of the Lord** (the seven year tribulation) has already begun. Don’t believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. ³ Don’t be fooled by what they say. For **that day** (*the Day of the Lord or seven year Tribulation*) will not come until there is **a great rebellion against God** (*The Great Apostasy - 1 Timothy 4:1 “Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.”*) and the **man of lawlessness** (*the antichrist*) **is revealed** (*the identity of the antichrist is made known*)—the one who brings destruction. ⁴ **He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God** (*What event is this referring to? Matthew 24:15—abomination of desolation, Dan 9:27—happens at halfway point of the 7 year tribulation*).

⁵ Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you? ⁶ And you know what is holding him back, for **he can be revealed** (*the antichrist*) only when **his time comes** (*the 7 year tribulation*). ⁷ For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until **the one who is holding it back steps out of the way** (*the Holy Spirit's purifying and preserving influence through the church, salt and light—the Holy Spirit is only taken out of the way, not removed from the earth*). ⁸ **Then the man of lawlessness** (*the antichrist*) will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay **him** (*the antichrist*) with the breath of his mouth and destroy **him** (*the antichrist*) by the splendour of **his coming** (*Jesus' second coming*).

⁹ **This man** (*the antichrist*) will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. ¹⁰ **He** (*the antichrist*) will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, **because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them** (*Why do people go to hell? People are only deceived and go to hell because they refuse to repent and accept God's gift of pardon or forgiveness. See John 3:18-21*).¹¹ So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. ¹² **Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth** (*Why are people condemned? Because they refuse to repent, to turn from their sin and turn to God. To repent means to confess and forsake all sin*).

¹⁵With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, **stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you** both in person and by letter (*What is Paul commanding them to do? Paul is commanding them to stand firm and have a good understanding of the end times teaching he had taught them*).

¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace **gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope**, ¹⁷ **comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say** (*What is the effect of standing firm and having a strong grip or good understanding of end times doctrine or teaching? Eternal comfort and a wonderful hope and strengthened in everything we do and say*).

To some, this may seem like too much for new believers to take in, and that it should only be for more mature believers. But consider that Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica for three weeks as he was travelling on one of his missionary journeys (Acts 17:2). Consider:

2 Thessalonians 2:5 NLT paraphrase

Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you?

What is striking to me, is that in that short time, he considered the teaching of end time events or prophecy as essential or foundational knowledge for the new believer. Why? Because of the persecution they were experiencing, they needed the eternal comfort and wonderful hope that a bright and glorious future provided. Don't you think that we also need eternal comfort and a wonderful hope as we go through the trials in our lives?

“As we come to understand that God is completely in control of world events, we start to have faith that He is also in control of our individual lives”

So what are some of the things Paul taught them while he was in Thessalonica for three weeks?

1. *The Rapture*
2. *The second coming of Christ*
3. *The Day of the Lord or Tribulation*
4. *The great rebellion against God*
5. *The “Abomination of Desolation”*
6. *Rapture then antichrist revealed*
7. *How to Identify antichrist/start of tribulation*
8. *When does Jesus come back*
9. *Sequence of events for 7 year tribulation*

If Paul thought that it was good and beneficial for his churches to understand these things, then I think that it's good for us to also try to understand them.

1. The Rapture

For starters, he taught them about the rapture. He referred to the rapture when he said in:

2 Thessalonians 2:1

“...and how we will be gathered to meet him.”

What is the rapture? The rapture is a future event, when, in the blink of an eye, the church is caught up to meet Jesus in the air and receive their glorified bodies. We then continue on to heaven. See also 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:52.

2. The second coming of Christ

He also taught them about the second coming of Christ which is when Jesus physically returns to earth, with the church, at the end of the 7 year tribulation.

2 Thessalonians 2:1

“...about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

Again, the second coming of Christ refers to when Jesus physically comes back to the earth with the church to claim the world for Himself at the end of the 7 year tribulation. We then rule and reign with Him for a thousand years.

3. The Day of the Lord/7 year Tribulation

Paul also taught them about the “Day of the Lord”. What is “the Day of the Lord”? It's simply another name for the seven year tribulation which follows the rapture.

2 Thessalonians 2:2 NLT paraphrase

Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that **the day of the Lord** has already begun.

Remember that the context of 2 Thessalonians 2 is that the people had been told that the tribulation had already started, which meant that they had missed the rapture. So Paul reminds them of what he previously taught them about end times prophecy, the sequence of events.

“**The day of the Lord**” is a phrase often used in the old testament, and it always refers to a cataclysmic future judgement when God judges all the earth. In the new testament, “the Day of the Lord” is usually referred to as a time of **tribulation** (see Mark 13:19, 24) or **the Great Tribulation** (see Revelation 2:22 and 7:14). We know from Daniel and Revelation that the tribulation, or “the Day of the Lord”, lasts for 7 years. Jesus referred to the second half of “the Day of the Lord” as a time of **Great Tribulation** (see Matthew 24:21). “The Day of the Lord” will indeed be a time of tribulation, with the second half being worse than the first because the antichrist breaks his promise with Israel, defiles the temple, demands to be worshipped as God, and suddenly attacks the nation of Israel (See Revelation 12). It’s important that we understand that the terms, “the Day of the Lord,” and “the tribulation” are both synonymous, that is, they refer to the same 7 year world wide judgement. Here are two old testament passages that refer to the end times tribulation, this 7 year long, world wide, terrifying judgement that will come upon the whole earth:

Jeremiah 30:7 NKJV

Alas! For that day is great,
So that none is like it;
And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble,
But he shall be saved out of it.

Jeremiah 30:7 NLT paraphrase

⁷ In all history there has never been such a time of terror.
It will be a time of trouble for my people Israel.
Yet in the end they will be saved!

Notice that this fits very well with Revelation 12, where Satan persecutes the nation of Israel during the second half of the tribulation.

Isaiah 13:6-13 NLT paraphrase

⁶ **Scream in terror, for the day of the Lord has arrived—
the time for the Almighty to destroy.**

⁷ Every arm is paralysed with fear.

Every heart melts,

⁸ and people are terrified.

Pangs of anguish grip them,
like those of a woman in labor.

They look helplessly at one another,
their faces aflame with fear.

⁹ **For see, the day of the Lord is coming—
the terrible day of his fury and fierce anger.**

The land will be made desolate,
and all the sinners destroyed with it.

¹⁰ The heavens will be black above them;
the stars will give no light.

The sun will be dark when it rises,
and the moon will provide no light.

¹¹ **“I, the Lord, will punish the world for its evil
and the wicked for their sin.**

I will crush the arrogance of the proud
and humble the pride of the mighty.

¹² **I will make people scarcer than gold—
more rare than the fine gold of Ophir.**

¹³ For I will shake the heavens.
The earth will move from its place
**when the Lord of Heaven's Armies displays his wrath
in the day of his fierce anger."**

This description of the world wide "Day of the Lord" fits in perfectly with the world wide cataclysmic judgments that are described in Revelation. In summary, Revelation chapters 6-19 describe in detail the "Day of the Lord", or what we call the 7 year tribulation.

4. What is the "great rebellion against God"?

Paul here mentions another event that must happen before the tribulation can happen.

2 Thessalonians 2:3a NLT paraphrase

³ Don't be fooled by what they say. For **that day** ("*the Day of the Lord*" or *seven year Tribulation*) will not come until there is **a great rebellion against God...**

This "great rebellion against God" is also referred to as *the great apostasy*, or *the falling away*. 1 Timothy 4:1 and 2 Timothy 4:3-4 give us more details about what actually happens.

1 Timothy 4:1 NLT paraphrase

Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the **last times** (*last days*) some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 NLT paraphrase

³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

What this is basically saying is that in the last days, there will be many professing believers, both true and false converts, that will follow after false teaching. Examples include the prosperity gospel and the various works based gospels. Jesus Himself said that, when He comes back, will He really find faith, or, how many will He find on the earth who have faith (Luke 18:8).

I would suggest to you today that this has already started. False doctrines are exploding, spreading like cancer. It is getting harder and harder to find people who are really dedicated to serving the Lord, who are fully submitted to Him. Generally speaking, the modern church has become "seeker friendly." People go to the church that suits them best, where they feel the happiest, and not to where they have been called to serve or the preaching challenges them to grow. Also, many people are unwilling to share the gospel with others, and also unwilling to learn how to. This is yet another sign that we are in the last days.

5. The “Abomination of Desolation”

2 Thessalonians 2:4 NLT paraphrase

He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.

What event is this referring to? It's pretty self explanatory. The antichrist will do exactly what it says he will do here. This also corresponds to Matthew 24:15 where Jesus calls this event, “the abomination of desolation”. Daniel 9:27—tells us that it happens at the halfway point of the 7 year tribulation—3 1/2 years or 42 months or 1260 days into the 7 year tribulation.

6. The antichrist can't be revealed until the church is caught up to be with Jesus.

Paul also taught them that it's only *after* the church is removed from this world that the antichrist will be revealed:

2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 NLT paraphrase

“...for he can be revealed only when his time comes. ⁷ For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one [the Holy Spirit] who is holding it back steps out of the way [the Holy Spirit's influence through the church]. ⁸ Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed,

Now, interestingly, because it seems we are so close to the rapture, many believe that the coming world dictator, known as the antichrist or the beast, as he is called in Revelation and Daniel, may well be alive right now. However, the scriptures show that he will not be revealed until the church is taken away. So don't bother trying to figure out who he might be.

What this means is that there will be a short time period between the rapture and the actual start of the 7 year tribulation during which the antichrist will rise to power.

7. How to identify the antichrist and the start of the tribulation?

So how will those living at the time recognise the antichrist? After all, he'll come across as a nice guy, a man of peace. He'll flatter people and solve problems. He'll get people working together. He won't appear evil. In fact, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 reveals a lot about Satan's tactics.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 NLT paraphrase

These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ But I am not surprised! **Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.** ¹⁵ So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve.

In summary, you won't recognise the antichrist because he is wearing a red cape, has horns on his head, and breathes fire. Think about the false apostles and false prophets and false teachers around today. *They are so convincing because they come across as being so nice. However, in reality they are Satan's servants disguised as Christ's servants. The “anti” in antichrist means counterfeit. It means that he looks, sounds and feels like the real thing—but he's fake.*

Here is another verse which shows just how good a fake the antichrist will be:

1 John 2:18-19 NLT paraphrase

¹⁸ Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. ¹⁹ These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.

So you see that these antichrists, these deceivers, looked so much like dinky die, true blue, ridgy-didge men of God, that while they were in the church not even the apostle John could really tell that they were evil. What this means is that we really need to know our bibles otherwise we will be deceived.

But, also notice that it says, “**Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming.**” The apostle John clearly taught that the antichrist is yet to come, and the the mark of the end times is deception—false teachers, false prophets, and false apostles. Yes there have been and will be deceivers, but the ultimate deceiver, the one indwelt by Satan himself, is yet to appear. The others are only types or pictures of the real thing, the final, last days antichrist.

So, back to our question. How will the world be able to recognise the start of the antichrist’s 7 year reign? The bible makes him very clear, very easy to spot. Daniel 9:27 tells us that the 7 year tribulation begins with the signing or confirming of a seven year peace treaty with Israel.

Daniel 9:27 NLT paraphrase

The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him.”

Now, consider current events in the middle east. You would have to be blind to not notice all the attention being given to Israel, especially the individual peace agreements that are currently being signed between Israel and Muslim nations. This goes against the ancient hatred—remember the ongoing jealousy between the Arabs and the Jews. This goes against all logic. This is supernatural. The world is moving toward acceptance of a peace treaty with Israel. This is another reason I believe the rapture is very close.

So now we know when the tribulation starts - it’s a short time after the rapture, and the 7 year countdown clock starts ticking the day the antichrist confirms the peace treaty with Israel.

8. Exactly when Does Jesus come back?

Half of the tribulation is 1260 days.

**Therefore, the whole 7 year tribulation period is:
1260 days x 2 = 2520 days**

The next logical question is then, “Exactly when does Jesus come back with the church to claim the earth as His own?” Well, remember we read in Revelation 12:6 that Jesus will protect and nourish the nation remnant of Israel for 1260 days, referring to the last half of the tribulation, or the last 3 1/2 years. That means that the full length of the

tribulation is twice 1260 days, or 2520 days. But you say that there are 365 days in a year so it doesn't add up. 365 days x 3 1/2 years doesn't equal 1260 days. The solution is to understand that there haven't always been 365 days in a year. Back when Daniel lived, in the time of the Babylonian empire, the calendar year was only 360 days long. Here's a slide that should help to make this clear.

Babylonian calendar: 1 year = 360 days.

360 days = 1 year

1,260 days = 3 1/2 years

2,520 days = 7 years

(Remember that we previously learned about Daniels 70 weeks or 70 sevens prophecy, that each week or seven represents 7 years, and that a year at that time was 360 days long. We know that this is the correct because of the exact fulfilment of prophecy given in Daniel 9:24-25, that after the first 69 weeks or sevens, or 483 years, Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on the donkey—we know this as palm Sunday. There were exactly 483 years, each consisting of 360 days, making 173,880 days until Jesus first coming.)

Therefore, using 360 number of days in a year, we can calculate that from the day that the antichrist confirms the peace treaty with Israel, there will be 2,520 days (seven years of 360) days until Jesus comes back to earth with the church.

So when this confirming of the covenant with Israel happens, the countdown clock starts ticking — The 7 year tribulation, also known as Daniel's 70th Week begins (the last of the seventy weeks of years or sevens of years decreed for Israel). The church age is over. God's evangelical outreach to the world through Israel resumes for the final 7 years. Then at the end of the 7 years Jesus comes back and the Millennium begins.

Refer to dispensation chart to see the above in picture form.

9. Sequence of events for the 7 year tribulation period (Day of the Lord)

So Paul in v 15 tells the believers to **stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter.** What are those things regarding the Rapture and the Tribulation? Based on what we already knew, and also what we read here, we now know the sequence of events around the 7 year tribulation.

Sequence of events for the 7 year Tribulation (Day of the Lord):

1. Rapture happens—the church is caught up from the earth to be with Jesus
2. Short time of preparation before the 7 year tribulation begins as the antichrist begins his rise to power
3. The clock starts ticking when the antichrist confirms a peace agreement with Israel for 7 years. Daniel's seventh week, the final 7 years decreed for Israel has begun.
4. Half-way through the antichrist breaks his promises to Israel, and defiles the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, claiming to be God. No more pretence or ecumenical religion—it's worship Satan and his antichrist or die.
5. The second half of the 7 year tribulation is called the Great Tribulation by Jesus in Matthew 24:21. There will be more intense persecution of believers, Jew and gentile.
6. The end of the 7 year tribulation is when Jesus comes back to claim the earth for Himself, as predicted many times in the scriptures.
7. Jesus then reigns on the earth for 1,000 years—the Millennial reign

Summary of what we have covered so far today—review questions:

1. **Antisemitism, the hatred of the Jews has been helped by two main sources. What are they?** *False teaching in the church (Replacement theology), and the ancient hatred—(the Arabs hating the Jews).*
2. **When will the antichrist be revealed or identified?** *The antichrist won't be revealed until after the church is raptured or taken away (2 Thessalonians 2:5-8).*
3. **Who will directly empower and direct the antichrist?** *The antichrist will do the work of Satan with all lies and deception (2 Thessalonians 2:9-14)*
4. **How will the antichrist come across at the start of the tribulation?** *The antichrist will initially come across as a man of peace, a problem solver, as someone who genuinely cares about people, even as a minister of God (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).*
5. **Is the rapture the start of the tribulation?** *No. There is a short time gap between the rapture and the start of the tribulation (Daniel 9:27).*
6. **When does the tribulation start?** *The tribulation starts when the antichrist confirms the peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27)*
7. **How will people know for sure who the antichrist is?** *People will only know for sure who the antichrist is when he confirms the peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27).*
8. **What is the “Abomination of Desolation and when does it happen?** *The antichrist will break his promises to Israel at the half way point of the 7 year tribulation - 1260 days (Daniel 9:27, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, Matthew 24:15). He will defile the temple and set up an image of himself in the holy place.*
9. **When will the world really know what the antichrist is really like?** *When the antichrist demands to be worshipped as God in the temple of God, the world will see his true colours—satanic (2 Thessalonians 2:4, Revelation 13:4).*
10. **How many days are there from the start of the tribulation to the second coming of Jesus?** *The end of the tribulation is exactly 2520 days after the confirming of the peace agreement with Israel—Jesus comes back with the church (Revelation 19:11-16).*
11. **What happens after the 7 year tribulation?** *After the 7 year tribulation, we reign with Jesus on earth for 1,000 years—the Millennial reign or the Kingdom of God on earth (Revelation 20).*

Conclusion

Colossians 1:3-5 NLT paraphrase

³ We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, ⁵ **which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven.** You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News.