

THE BEGINNING OF THE TRIBULATION

I. THE _____ KING IS COMING - (He may already be here!)

A. He is coming, just like the others God showed to Daniel (Dan. 2, 7)

1. Like in Babylon of Daniel's own day, God showed him Babylon would fall to an alliance of the _____ and Persians. Sixty years before it happened, Daniel prophesied it. At the time of the prophecy, the Medes & Persians had not even struck an alliance and were not major world powers.

But sixty years later, after Nebuchadnezzar was dead, and with Belshazzar ruling over the city, Daniel was summoned to the banquet hall where a mysterious, _____ hand had written the words: mene, mene, tekal, upharsin. Daniel interpreted the writing and told Belshazzar and his drunken guests that the God of heaven had weighed the king in the balance and found him wanting. He told him that tonight his kingdom would be given to the Medes and Persians.

The hall roared with laughter. Babylon remained a seemingly invincible power. The city of Babylon was considered impregnable. It was surrounded by walls _____ feet high and wide enough for 5 chariots to run abreast! It was so large that it had its own farms within the walls. It even had its own river, the mighty Euphrates. The Euphrates flowed under the walls at which point sharp iron stakes penetrated the water, preventing boats or swimming soldiers from entering the city. The king was so confident of the security of the city that no _____ were even posted.



But little did Belshazzar know that already that day the Persians under the leadership of Cyrus had completed a _____ upstream to divert the flow of the Euphrates. The water level had already begun to drop below the protection of the iron stakes. While God was sending His message by way of the miraculous hand, soldiers were marching down the dry river bed toward the unguarded walls and gates left open to the river. Belshazzar could never imagine that while Daniel interpreted the message of God and declared that _____ would lose his life and his kingdom that very night, soldiers were crawling under the iron gates at the river and filling the streets of his city.

But my friend, that night, Cyrus took Babylon, killed Belshazzar, and gave the city to King Darius, the Mede, just like God had declared through Daniel ____ years before when he explained the dream of the statue.



The Wicked King is coming ...

2. Like _____ the Great of Greece. God declared the rise of Greece under the leadership of a powerful young king ____ years before Alexander was born. At the time, Greece consisted of five tribes who were at constant war with each other. The thought that these diverse tribes could unite into an empire and topple the mighty Persian Empire seemed _____ at best.

But God put His hand upon the young son of one of the tribal kings, who was tutored by Aristotle himself, and gave him great understanding and military prowess. Upon his father's death, Alexander retrained Macedon's troops with military _____ of his own devising. He soon conquered and then befriended the other tribes and became the King of all Greece.



Then in moves still admired by military strategists, young Alexander led his troops to engage the King of Persia and defeat him. He proceeded to conquer most of the known world by the age of _____. When Alexander came to the land of Palestine, he found the descendants of the remnant who

returned from the Babylonian captivity and had _____ Jerusalem and the temple. When Alexander besieged the city, the high priest requested an audience with him. The high priest showed Alexander the _____ God had sent through Daniel of his own life and of the rise of his kingdom. He instructed the great Greek king in the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, and 8. It is said that Alexander fell to ground and proclaimed YHWH Lord of Israel. He then left Jerusalem standing and went on to conquer _____.

Folks, the Wicked King is coming ...

3. **Like the cruel emperors of _____ also came.** As the statue of _____ legs, the Roman Empire marched across the face of the globe, crushing cities and nations. Like a dreadful beast with iron teeth it consumed everything that opposed it. Yet the ancient Roman Empire was just a _____ for the empire that will one day arise.



4. The Wicked King is coming out of a confederation of nations that have their historic roots in the Roman Empire. The same God through the same prophet Daniel that correctly predicted the rise of Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome said that _____ would rise, a wicked king, out of the remnants of the Roman Empire - a king that would be more powerful and more wicked than any king that has ever ruled upon the earth.

B. What will this Wicked King, called in Scripture the _____, be like? Let us look at ...

II. THE PERSON OF THE ANTICHRIST

Let's revisit some of the details of Daniel 7, the Vision of the Four Beasts, to study some of the characteristics of the antichrist.

Daniel 7

8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

19 "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

A. The antichrist will be a man who has yielded himself to _____ domination.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

B. As such, he is a master deceiver.

1. While he is anti-Christ in the sense of the word that he is the antagonist of Christ and the enemy of God, he is at first not _____ so.
2. The Greek word *αντιχριστος* is constructed of two parts: anti and christos. The first can mean adversary or antagonist, but it can also mean _____ for or that which takes the place of.
 - a. So the antichrist will be a _____ messiah, readily received by the Jews and others as their savior.
 - b. He will enter into a partnership for a while with the false _____ and a world religious system, at least as long as it furthers his wicked purposes.
 - c. He will seek to _____ God and Christ as the objects of men's worship, adoration, and loyalty.

C. He will be the fulfillment of the _____ dream, an apparently perfect, self-made, self-actualized man. (Dan. 7 is instructive in its description.)

1. **He will have great human _____.** (Dan. 7:8 "eyes like eyes of a man" refers to intellectual insight.)
 - a. He will appear to have solutions to the vast problems of the world.
 - b. He will be well _____ for his wisdom and the world will gladly follow his leadership.

2. He will have great _____ ability. Daniel 7:8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

a. "pompous words" means literally "great things."

Daniel 7:25 He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

b. He will be exceedingly persuasive as he deceives the people into believing that the God of the Bible is a myth and Jesus an impostor.

3. He will be a _____ master. Daniel 7:23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.'

a. "devour the earth...trample in pieces"

b. Those he cannot deceive or persuade, he will conquer.

c. Such military power produces fear.

Revelation 13:4 So they worshipped the dragon (*Satan*) who gave authority to the beast (*Antichrist*); and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (*Italics – my interpretation*)

4. He will be a _____ leader.

a. Not of any of the old religions

b. But of a new, humanistic religion which possibly is a composite of them all.

c. 7:25 – "change times and law"

5. He will be an _____ genius.

Daniel 8:25 "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart. He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without *human* means.

a. He will establish a worldwide economy under his control that will cause many to prosper.

b. But he will use that prosperity ultimately to _____ them.

III. THE TRIBULATION BEGINS WITH THE RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST TO POWER.

A. His rise to power will be peaceful, though not without the threat of force, over the 10 nation _____.

Revelation 6:2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

1. note: a bow, but no _____
2. note: this is an _____ of Christ on the white horse of Rev 19. Observe the differences:
 - a. bow, not sword
 - b. 1 crown, not many crowns

IV. HIS FIRST ACT WILL BE TO MAKE A _____ WITH ISRAEL.

Daniel 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Daniel 9:27 is part to the prophecy of the seventy sevens we read last week. Remember that this prophecy was for Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city. It was God's plan for the _____ and Jerusalem.

Therefore this covenant, or we might say treaty, will be one which the antichrist makes with Israel.

A. Why would Israel make a treaty with antichrist?

1. Because they do not _____ him for who he is.
2. Because in their spiritual blindness, they do not know what he will do.
3. Because they want the benefits of the treaty.

B. Daniel, nor the rest of Scripture as far as I know, tells us the content of the treaty.

1. Many students of Scripture who take a literal, futuristic view of Revelation and other end times prophecies think this may well be a treaty to guarantee Israel's right to _____ and the sovereignty of its borders, the one thing it wants more than anything else in the world.
2. This is consistent with the description in Daniel 11 of the antichrist coming to Israel's defense in the early days of the Battle of God and Magog. We will look at this in greater detail next week.

CONCLUSION: The antichrist is coming. 1 John 2:18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.