

A high-angle photograph of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy. The massive dome and classical facade are the central focus. In the foreground, a vast, dense crowd of people fills St. Peter's Square, extending towards the base of the building. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text 'WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST?' is superimposed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the upper portion of the image.

WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST?

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STUDY GUIDE

LESSON 15

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15. Who is the Antichrist?

This study will clearly explain a power that has thought to change God's law, and will unmistakably identify the antichrist. Some of what you discover may displease or sadden you, however, remember that these prophecies were given by Jesus to let us know things which were to come to pass.

This study is only an opening to understanding much of the last day events which revolve around this evil power.

1. As Daniel chapter 7 begins, Daniel sees four beasts coming up out of the sea. In prophecy, what does a beast represent? What does the sea represent?

"And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." (Daniel 7:3)

"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth" (Daniel 7:23).

"The waters... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (Revelation 17:15)

Answer: A beast represents a kingdom or nation. Water represents multitudes of people or large populations. (Rev 17:15)

2. The four beasts of Daniel 7 represent four kingdoms (Dan 7:17, 18). Babylon, the first kingdom (Daniel 2:38, 39), is represented as a lion in Daniel 7:4. (See also Jeremiah 4:7; 50:17, 43, 44.) What do the "eagle's wings" mean? What do the "four winds" of verse 2 represent?



"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." (Daniel 7:4)

"The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them...Behold, he shall come up like a lion..." (Jeremiah 50:43, 44)

"The LORD shall bring a nation against thee... [as swift] as the eagle flieth" (Deuteronomy 28:49).

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts: ... and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth... And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from [one] end of the earth even unto the [other] end of the earth" (Jeremiah 25:33).

"The lion is come up from his thicket... Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles." (Jer 4:7, 13)

Answer: The Lion with the wings of eagles represent speed. (See also Jeremiah 4:13; Habakkuk 1:6–8.) Winds represent armies, strife, commotion, and destruction. (See also Revelation 7:1–3.)



3. What kingdom does the bear represent (Daniel 7:5)? What do the three ribs in its mouth symbolize?

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh." (Daniel 7:5)

"PERES; Thy [Belshazzar's] kingdom [Babylon] is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." (Daniel 5:28)

Answer: Read Daniel 8. Notice that the beasts in chapter 8 parallel those in chapter 7. Daniel 8:20 specifically names Medo-Persia as the kingdom that precedes the male goat—that is, Greece—of verse 21. Medo-Persia is the second kingdom—the same power as the bear of Daniel 7. The empire was made up of two groups of people. The Medes came up first (represented in Daniel 7:5 by the bear raising up on one side), but the Persians eventually became stronger (represented in Daniel 8:3 by the ram's second horn which "came up last" that grew "higher"). The three ribs

would be symbolic of three beasts which represent the three principal powers conquered by Medo-Persia: Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt.

4. Greece, the third kingdom (Daniel 8:21), is represented by a leopard with four wings and four heads (Daniel 7:6). What do the wings represent? What do the four heads represent?

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it." (Daniel 7:6)

Answer: The four wings (instead of two, as the lion had) represent the incredible speed with which Alexander the great conquered the region (Jeremiah 4:11–13). The four heads represent the four kingdoms into which the empire of Alexander the Great was divided when he died. (See also Daniel 8:8, 22) The four generals who headed these areas were Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.



5. The Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom, is represented by a powerful monster with iron teeth and 10 horns (Daniel 7:7). What do the horns represent?

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces... and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." (Daniel 7:7)

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." (Daniel 7:24)

Answer: The 10 horns represent the 10 kings or kingdoms into which pagan Rome was eventually split (Daniel 7:24). (These 10 kingdoms are the same as the 10 toes of the image described in Daniel 2:41–44.) Roving barbarian tribes swept in upon the Roman Empire and carved out land niches for their people. Seven of those 10 tribes developed into the countries of modern Western Europe, while three were “uprooted” and destroyed. The next section will discuss those kingdoms that were rooted up.



Heruli

Visigoths

Anglo-Saxons

Franks

Alemani

Burgundians

Lombards

Suevi

Visigoths- Rooted up 508AD -

Vandals - Rooted up 533 AD

Ostrogoths - Rooted up 538 AD



6. In the Daniel 7 prophecy, what happens next?

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn [were] eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." (Daniel 7:8)

"... and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." (Daniel 7:24)

Answer: The “little horn” power appears next. We must identify it carefully because the biblical characteristics identify it as the antichrist of prophecy and history. There must be no mistake in making this identification.

In 496 AD King Clovis of France was baptized by the Papacy. In 508 AD a major defeat of the Arian tribe the Visigoths took place and Clovis was honored as the first son of the Roman Church. In 533 AD the Vandals were uprooted and a decree was written called the Justinian Code which declared that anyone who did not honor the Trinity or publicly acknowledge the Catholic Faith was to be branded as a heretic, and punished with severe “violence.” Shortly after this in 538 AD the Ostrogoth’s, the final Arian tribe, were completely destroyed and the Justinian Code concerning the Trinity and the Catholic Faith was made the law of the land. Church and State had prevailed, and this power wasn’t taken away from the Papacy until the year 1798.

7. Does the Bible give clear points identifying antichrist?

Yes. God’s Word gives us nine characteristics of the antichrist in Daniel 7 so we can be certain of his identity. And even though some might find these truths painful, we must be honest enough to accept them as His revealed will. Now let’s discover these nine points.

Answer:

A. The little horn would come “up among them”—that is, from among the 10 horns that were the kingdoms of Western Europe (Daniel 7:8). So it would be a little kingdom somewhere in Western Europe.



B. It would have a man at its head who could speak for it (Daniel 7:8).

C. It would pluck out or uproot three kingdoms (Daniel 7:8).

D. It would be different from the other 10 kingdoms (Daniel 7:24).

E. It would make war with and persecute the saints (Daniel 7:21, 25).

F. It would emerge from the pagan Roman Empire—the fourth kingdom (Daniel 7:7, 8).

G. God’s people (the saints) “shall be given into his hand” for “a time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25).

H. It would “speak great words against” or blaspheme God (Daniel 7:25 KJV). In Revelation 13:5, the Bible says the same power speaks “great things and blasphemies.”

I. It would “think to change times and law” (Daniel 7:25).

Don’t forget—all these identification points come directly from the Bible. They are not some human opinion or speculation. Historians could tell you quickly what power is being described, because these points fit only one power—the papacy. But in order to be certain, let us carefully examine all nine points one by one. There must be no room left for doubt.

8. Does the papacy fit these points?

Answer:Yes—it fits every point. Let’s take a closer look:**A. It came up among the 10 kingdoms of Western Europe.**

The geographical location of the papal power is in Rome, Italy—in the heart of Western Europe. “If a man consider the origin of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the Papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof.”

Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan: 457.

B. It would have a man at its head who speaks for it.

The papacy meets this identifying mark because it does have one man at the head—the pope—who speaks for it.

C. Three kingdoms were plucked up to make way for the rise of the papacy.

As was mentioned in question 6. It used the State power that it gained from the Emperor to uproot three tribes, the Visigoths, Vandals, and Ostrogoths.

D. It would be different from the other kingdoms.

The papacy clearly fits this description, as it came on the scene as a religious power and was different from the secular or civil nature of the other 10 kingdoms.

E. It would make war with and persecute the saints.



That the church did persecute is a well-known fact, and the papacy admits doing so. Historians believe the church destroyed at least 50 million lives over matters of religious conviction. We quote here from two sources:

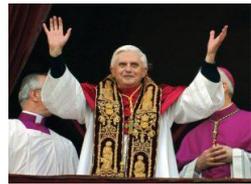
“That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history.” [History of the Rise and

Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, Volume II, p. 32]

In The History of the Inquisition of Spain, D. Ivan Antonio Llorente provides these figures from the Spanish Inquisition alone: “31,912 persons were condemned and perished in the flames,” and 241,450 were “condemned to severe “penances.”

Words of Care and Concern

Lest anyone should think that we are attacking fellow Christians by identifying the little horn power, please keep in mind that the prophecy is aimed at a system and not individuals. There are sincere, devout people in all churches, including the Catholic faith. Daniel 7 is simply a message of judgment and correction upon a large religious institution that compromised with paganism, as many other churches have also done.



Prophecy Reveals Faults of All Faiths

Other prophecies point out the faults of the Protestant and Jewish faiths. God has true people in all religions. His true people (no matter what their faith) will always humbly accept the correction of the Lord and will not shut their ears and hearts against Him. We should be thankful that God’s Word speaks with impartial honesty on every subject.

F. It would emerge from the fourth kingdom of iron—the pagan Roman Empire.

We quote two authorities on this point:



“The mighty Catholic Church was little more than the Roman Empire baptized. ... The very capital of the old Roman Empire became the capital of the Christian empire. The office of Pontifex Maximus was continued in that of the pope.” (A. C. Flick, The Rise of the Mediaeval Church, 1909 edition, p. 148)

“Whatever Roman elements the barbarians and Arians left ... [came] under the protection of the Bishop of Rome, who was the chief person there after the emperor’s disappearance. ... The Roman church ... pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation.” (Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity? 1963, pp. 269-270)

G. God’s people (the saints) would “be given into his hand” for “a time and times and half a time.”

Several things need clarification here:

- 1. A time is a year, times is two years, and half a time is half of a year. The Amplified Bible translates it: “Three and one-half years.”
- 2. This same time period is mentioned seven times in the books of Daniel and Revelation (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5): three times as a “time, times, and half a time”; twice

as 42 months; and twice as 1,260 days. Based on the 30-day calendar used by the Jews, these time periods are all the same amount of time: 3½ years = 42 months = 1,260 days.

3. One prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34).

4. Thus, the little horn (antichrist) was to have power over the saints for 1,260 prophetic days; that is, 1,260 literal years.



5. The rule of the papacy began in ad 538, when the last of the three opposing Arian kingdoms was uprooted. Its rule continued until 1798 when Napoleon's general, Berthier, took the pope captive with hopes of destroying both Pope Pius VI and the political power of the papacy. This period of time is an exact fulfillment of the 1,260-year prophecy. The blow was a deadly wound for the papacy.

H. It would speak "great words" of blasphemy "against [God]." (Dan 7:25)

Blasphemy has two definitions in Scripture:

- 1.** Claiming to have the power to forgive sins (Luke 5:21).
- 2.** Claiming to be God (John 10:33).

Does this point fit the papacy? Yes. Let's first look at the evidence for it claiming to forgive sins, taken directly from its own literature:

"Does the Priest truly forgive the sins, or does he only declare that they are remitted? The Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ." (Joseph Deharbe, Catechism of the Catholic Religion (1912).)



The papacy further undermines Jesus by setting up a system of confession to an earthly priest, thus bypassing Jesus, our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 8:1, 2) and only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). Next, consider the evidence for it claiming to be God:

"We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." (Pope Leo XIII Encyclical Letter, June 20, 1894)

The Pope and God are the same, so he has all power in Heaven and earth." (Pope Pius V, quoted in Barclay, Cities Petrus Bertanous Chapter XXVII: 218)

I. It would "think to change times and law."

When we look at the ten commandments of the Catholic Church as listed in their catechism. We find that the Catholic Church has removed the second commandment which has to do with the adoration of images, and then divided the tenth commandment to complete the ten and finally changed the days of worship which God commanded, especially the fourth commandment of the Sabbath.

"Question.-Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?"

"Answer.-Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her,-she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."-" A Doctrinal Catechism," Rev. Stephen Keenan, page 174. Imprimatur, John Cardinal McCloskey, archbishop of New York.

"Question.-How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?"

"Answer.-By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.

"Question.-How prove you that?

"Answer.-Because by keeping Sunday they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin: and by not keeping the rest by her commanded, they deny again, in fact, the same power."-

An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine," composed in 1649, by Rev. Henry Tuberville, D. D.

Not only do they admit to changing the Sabbath day, but they also profess to have changed God's appointed times including the feasts.

"From Rome there came now another addition to the sun-worshiping apostasy. The first Christians being mostly Jews, continued to celebrate the passover in remembrance of the death of Christ, the true passover; and this was continued among those who from among the Gentiles had turned to Christ. Accordingly the celebration was always on the true passover day -- the fourteenth of the first month. Rome, however, and from her all the West, adopted the day of the sun as the day of this celebration." (AT Jones Great Empires of Prophecy Page 314, 315)

"Is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday, to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? Is not the observance of this law among the most prominent of our sacred duties? But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify".

(The Faith of Our Fathers," by James Cardinal Gibbons, Baltimore, John Murphy & Co., 1893, page 111)



The Papacy has certainly attempted or "thought to change times and laws." (Daniel 7:25)

9. Wasn't Daniel told to seal up his book "even to the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4)? When will Daniel's prophecies be opened to our understanding?

Answer: In Daniel 12:4, the prophet was told to seal the book till the "time of the end." In verse 6 an angelic voice asked, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" Verse 7 says, "It shall be for a time, times, and half a time." The angel assured Daniel that the section of the book dealing with end-time prophecies would be opened after the end of the 1,260-year period of papal control, which was, as we learned earlier in this Study Guide, 1798. So the time of the end began in the year 1798. As we have seen, the book of Daniel contains crucial messages from heaven for us today. We must understand it.

All religious teachings must be compared with Scripture to determine their accuracy

10. Many Christians today have been misinformed regarding the antichrist. To believe an untruth about the antichrist could cause a person to be deceived. What should a person do when new Bible teachings are encountered?



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Answer: When a new Bible teaching is encountered, the only safe procedure is to compare it carefully with Scripture to see if it is in harmony with God's Word.

11. Are you willing to follow where Jesus leads, even though it might be painful? Answer:

Concluding Remarks

Much more prophecy is to be looked at in upcoming studies. What is the importance of studying prophecy?

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." (2 Peter 1:12)

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:" (2 Peter 1:19)

- A. Reveal earth's closing events.
- B. Identify the participants in the final phase of the battle between Jesus and Satan.
- C. Clearly reveal Satan's sinister plans to ensnare and destroy us all so that we are able to take heed.
- D. Give us faith in the word of God
- E. Uplift Jesus—His salvation, love, power, mercy, and justice

Major Participants Will Appear Repeatedly

Key participants in the closing war between Jesus and Satan will appear repeatedly in these prophecies. These include: Jesus, Satan, the United States, the Papacy, Protestantism, and Spiritism. Jesus repeats and expands His messages from the prophets to make certain His warnings of love and protection come through with clarity and certainty.



THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. I always thought the antichrist is a person, not an organization. Am I wrong?

This Study has presented evidence that the antichrist is an organization or a kingdom—the papacy. The words “eyes of a man” in Daniel 7:8, however, do point to a leader. Revelation 13:18 speaks of a man with a number being involved as we shall come to. In Daniel 8, Greece is represented by a goat and its leader, Alexander the Great, is symbolized by a horn. The same is true of antichrist. The organization is the papacy. The pope in office is its representative. There are many warm, kind Catholics. The system, however, is called antichrist because it has attempted to usurp Jesus’ authority and attempted to change His law.

2. Do you think it is wise for Christians to pass laws enforcing Christianity?

No. The Bible is clear that all should have freedom to choose the direction they wish to go in matters of conscience (Joshua 24:15)—even if they choose to deny God. The Creator permitted Adam and Eve to choose to disobey even though it hurt both them and Him. Forced worship is not acceptable to God. Forced worship is the devil’s way. God’s way is loving persuasion. History shows that virtually every time the church passed laws to enforce its beliefs, persecution and murder of others resulted. This is a lesson we can learn from the history of ancient Babylon, (Daniel 3, 6) as well as the modern history of the little horn during the Middle Ages.

3. Perhaps I have misunderstood, but my concept has always been that antichrist would be an evil being who openly opposed God. Is this concept incorrect?

We usually consider the word “anti” to mean “against.” It can also mean “in the place of” or “instead of.” Antichrist is guilty of assuming the prerogatives of God. It claims:

- A. Its priests can forgive sins—which only God can do (Luke 5:21).
- B. To have changed God’s law by dropping out the second commandment (against worshipping images) and splitting the tenth into two parts. God’s law cannot be changed (Matthew 5:18).
- C. That the pope is God on earth.

Satan's Original Plan

Satan’s original plan was to assume God’s position and authority. (Isaiah 14:12) His aim was to oust

God and rule in His place. When Satan was ejected from heaven, his aim did not change but rather intensified. Through the centuries he has endeavored, using various human agencies, to discredit God and take over His position.

Antichrist Appears to Be Spiritual

Satan aims to replace God in these last days by deceiving people into following the antichrist, who appears spiritual and holy. The main purpose of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is to expose Satan's traps and strategies and lead people to anchor in Jesus and His Word for safety.

Antichrist Will Deceive Many

Most people will follow the antichrist (Revelation 13:3) thinking they are following Christ. Only the elect will be safe (Matthew 24:23, 24). They will be secure because they test every spiritual teaching and leader by Scripture (Isaiah 8:20). Religious deception is everywhere. We cannot be too careful.

4. Doesn't the Bible say in 1 John 2:18–22 that there are many antichrists?

Yes. There have been many antichrists down through history who have worked against the kingdom of God. However, there is only one entity that specifically fulfills all the prophesied characteristics of the antichrist. In Daniel chapters 7 and 8 and in Revelation chapter 13, you will find at least 10 identifying traits of the antichrist. These 10 identifying marks are all fulfilled in only one entity—the papacy.

5. In prophecy, does the symbol "beast" mean "bestly" characteristics?

Not at all. God uses the symbolism of a beast to signify a ruler, nation, government, or kingdom. (Dan 7:17, 23) It is His way of depicting governments in prophecy. We do this ourselves to some degree: We have depicted Russia as a bear, the United States as an eagle, etc. The symbol "beast" is not a demeaning, disrespectful term. It is synonymous with "animal" or "creature." Even Christ is portrayed as a lamb by John the Baptist (John 1:29) and the apostle John (Revelation 5:6, 9, 12, 13). The term "beast" is utilized by God to give us a message about nations and leaders—good and evil.

QUIZ QUESTIONS

- 1. Which four world kingdoms are represented by beast symbols in Daniel chapter (4)**
 Sweden.
 Egypt.
 Greece.
 China.
 Medo-Persia.
 Japan.
 Babylon.
 Iraq.
 Rome.
- 2. In Bible prophecy, a beast represents a (1)**
 Computer.
 Kingdom or nation.
 Creature or alien.
- 3. The 10 horns on the monster beast represent (1)**
 Ten years.
 Ten special cities.
 Angels.
 Riches.
 The kingdoms into which pagan Rome eventually split.
- 4. How many tribes or nations were "rooted up" by the little horn power? (1)**
 Eight.
 One.

- Six.
- Three.
5. **The little horn power, or Antichrist, represents (1)**
- One of Babylon's generals.
- An evil ruler from the days of old pagan Rome.
- An evil power that will arise after the second coming of Jesus.
- Atheism.
- The papacy.
6. **Check the true statements about the little horn (Antichrist) power from the list below: (3)**
- It came from Egypt.
- It would persecute God's people.
- It arose immediately after Babylon fell.
- It speaks great words against God.
- It attempted to change God's law.
7. **In prophecy, "time, times, and a half time" is symbolic of (1)**
- Three and one-half literal days.
- 42 years.
- 1,260 literal years.
8. **When did "the time of the end" begin? (1)**
- A.D. 31
- A.D. 1991
- A.D. 588
- A.D. 1798
9. **Antichrist is an organization, rather than a person. (1)**
- Yes.
- No.
10. **Antichrist exists today. (1)**
- Yes.
- No.
11. **God approves of enforcing true worship by law. (1)**
- Yes.
- No.
12. **General Berthier's capture of the pope only wounded the papacy. Its deadly wound began to heal and continues healing today. (1)**
- Yes.
- No.
13. **What item from the list below is essential for the spiritual safety of God's people in these end-time days? (1)**
- Learn to preach.
- Pray much in public.
- Test every religious teaching by the Bible.
14. **Are you willing to follow where Jesus leads, even though it may be painful? (1)**
- Yes.
- No.

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