

# 4.2 - The Beast

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Elsewhere, we discuss reasons why [Nero](#) cannot be the [Beast](#) of Revelation. Here, we consider the real Beast of Revelation—a future figure who has yet to appear. A person who will far surpass anything [Nero](#) exhibited in the way of Christian persecution and worldwide influence.

### 4.2.1 - Man of Many Names

The title “[Beast](#)” is used of the evil individual who figures large in various passages of the book of Revelation (Rev. 11:7<sup>+</sup>; 13:1-4<sup>+</sup>, 11-12<sup>+</sup>, 14-15<sup>+</sup>, 17-18<sup>+</sup>; 14:9<sup>+</sup>, 11<sup>+</sup>; 15:2<sup>+</sup>; 16:2<sup>+</sup>, 10<sup>+</sup>, 13<sup>+</sup>; 17:3<sup>+</sup>, 7-8<sup>+</sup>, 11-13<sup>+</sup>, 16-17<sup>+</sup>; 19:19-20<sup>+</sup>; 20:4<sup>+</sup>, 10<sup>+</sup>). This title reflects his vicious character and appears to form an intentional contrast against that of Christ as the “Lamb” (Rev. 5:6<sup>+</sup>, 8<sup>+</sup>, 12-13<sup>+</sup>; 6:1<sup>+</sup>, 16<sup>+</sup>; 7:9-10<sup>+</sup>, 14<sup>+</sup>, 17<sup>+</sup>; 12:11<sup>+</sup>; 13:8<sup>+</sup>, 11<sup>+</sup>; 14:1<sup>+</sup>, 4<sup>+</sup>, 10<sup>+</sup>; 15:3<sup>+</sup>; 17:14<sup>+</sup>; 19:7<sup>+</sup>, 9<sup>+</sup>; 21:9<sup>+</sup>, 14<sup>+</sup>, 22-23<sup>+</sup>, 27<sup>+</sup>; 22:1<sup>+</sup>, 3<sup>+</sup>). As parallels between the book of Revelation and Daniel make plain, this individual is also connected with the final beastly kingdom described in Daniel (Dan. 7:4-11, 19-20 cf. Rev. 13:2<sup>+</sup>). A systematic study across Scripture reveals many names which are applied to this individual.

Among the more obvious epithets are:

1. little horn (Dan. 7:8<sup>+</sup>),
2. insolent king (Dan. 8:23<sup>+</sup>),
3. prince who is to come (Dan. 9:26<sup>+</sup>),
4. one who makes desolate (Dan. 9:27<sup>+</sup>),
5. despicable person (Dan. 11:21<sup>+</sup>),
6. strong-willed king (Dan. 11:36<sup>+</sup>),
7. worthless shepherd (Zec. 11:16-17),
8. man of lawlessness, and the son of destruction (2Th. 2:3<sup>+</sup>);
9. the lawless one (2Th. 2:8<sup>+</sup>),
10. the beast (Rev. 11:7<sup>+</sup>; Rev 13:1<sup>+</sup>; Rev 14:9<sup>+</sup>; Rev 15:2<sup>+</sup>; Rev 16:2<sup>+</sup>; Rev 17:3<sup>+</sup>; Rev 17:13<sup>+</sup>; Rev 19:20<sup>+</sup>; Rev 20:10<sup>+</sup>).<sup>1</sup>

These various names, titles or descriptions simply portray the various facets of his character. Taken together, these names portray him as the epitome of evil in the human realm, just as Satan is the epitome of evil in the angelic realm. The various names are as follows:

1. The Seed of Satan (Gen. 3:15<sup>+</sup>);
2. The Little Horn (Dan. 7:8<sup>+</sup>);
3. The King of Fierce Countenance (Dan. 8:23<sup>+</sup>);
4. The Prince That Shall Come (Dan. 9:26<sup>+</sup>);
5. The Desolator (Dan. 9:27<sup>+</sup>);
6. The Willful King (Dan. 11:36<sup>+</sup>);
7. The Man of Sin (2Th. 2:3<sup>+</sup>);
8. The Son of Perdition (2Th. 2:3<sup>+</sup>);
9. The Lawless One (2Th. 2:8<sup>+</sup>);
10. The Antichrist (1Jn. 2:22<sup>+</sup>);
11. The Beast (Rev. 11:7<sup>+</sup>).<sup>2</sup>

Among all these titles, his most commonly known title is “the [Antichrist](#).” Although this title appears in **only one passage** (1Jn. 2:22<sup>+</sup>), it is an apt description of his character and ministry.

The vast majority of prophetic scholars have used a single name for this future world dictator: the Antichrist. Although this may not be his most common name in Scripture, it is a well-chosen title. It is a title that describes his true intent, which is to be against Messiah. All the other names essentially portray the various characteristics which he will use in his opposition to Messiah.<sup>3</sup>

Since that is his most widely-used name, we will refer to the Beast as the Antichrist throughout this discussion.

#### 4.2.2 - A Pre-Christian Concept

Some have thought the [Antichrist](#) to be a Christian invention, but it predates Christianity. This is to be expected since the Old Testament reveals considerable detail concerning this individual.

David Flusser. . . an expert on Second Temple Judaism and the origins of Christianity, . . . categorically states: “The idea of Antichrist is strictly Jewish and pre-Christian.” This is evident from the expression itself, for just as the Greek word *Christos* (Christ) is the translation of the Hebrew word *Mashiach* (Messiah), so “Antichrist” is in fact “Anti-Messiah.”<sup>4</sup>

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls is found the description of an individual who *sounds* like the promised Messiah, but is said to be an opponent of Israel. This is the role of Anti-Messiah.

In a fragmentary pseudo-Daniel text from Qumran Cave 4, the description of an evil end-time king who oppresses Israel includes the words: “[ ]he shall be great on earth . . . [all] will worship and all will serve [him] . . . great . . . he shall be called and by His name he shall be designated. He shall be named son of God and they shall call him son of the Most High.” (4Q246 1:8-10) This might appear to be a reference to the Messiah rather than the Antimessiah if it were not describing an opponent of Israel.<sup>5</sup>

Among the legends of Judaism, he is known as *Armilus* (also *Armilius*):

*Armilus*: legendary name of the Messiah’s antagonist or anti-Messiah. *Armilus* appears frequently in the later Apocalyptic Midrashim, such as *Midrash Va-Yosha*, *Sefer Zerubbavel*, and *Nistarot shel R. Shimon b. Yohai*. He is also mentioned in the Targum pseudo-Jonathan, Isa. 11:14 and in the Targum Yerushalmi A (Deu. 34:3). *Armilus* is first mentioned otherwise in Saadia Gaon’s *Emunot ve-De’ot* (Ma’amar 8), apparently under the influence of *Sefer Zerubbavel*.<sup>6</sup>

*Armilus* is first mentioned in the Targum pseudo-Jonathan: “The earliest reference to *Armilus* dates from the seventh century. It is found in the Targum to Isaiah 11:4 . . . which it renders, ‘And with speech of his lips he shall slay the wicked *Armilus*.’ ”<sup>7</sup> Notice how similar this passage is to Paul’s comments in 2Th. 2:8. One reference to *Armilus* even calls him “Antichrist.”<sup>8</sup> Although there are many aspects of the *Armilus* legend which are unbiblical and fanciful, other aspects of the legend reflect Scriptural truths such as his claim to worship (Dan. 11:36). “He will say to them: ‘I am your god, I am your Messiah and your god!’ . . . (T’fillat R. Shim’on ben Yohai, BhM 4:124-26).”<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the claims of the [preterists](#), Judaism understands this coming figure as ruling the *entire world*, not just first-century Rome. “the whole earth, . . . will tell him that he is the Messiah, . . . and the whole earth will submit to him, and he will slay those who do not submit. . . . (Ma’ase Daniel, pp. 222-25).”<sup>10</sup> He was also expected to banish Israel into the wilderness (Rev. 12:6-15+).

Works such as *Sefer Zerubbavel* and those by Saadia Gaon reveal . . . *Armilus* will deceive the whole world into believing that he is God and will reign over the whole world. . . . *Armilus* is expected to persecute and banish Israel to the wilderness and it will be a time of unprecedented distress for Israel . . . and the Gentiles will expel the Jews from their lands.<sup>11</sup>

Whereas some expect the Antichrist to arise from Dan (see below), others suggest *Armilus* will arise from Ephraim: <sup>12</sup> Interestingly, both of these tribes are omitted in the list of tribes which are sealed for protection during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:4-8+). See commentary on [Revelation 7:4](#).

#### 4.2.3 - Jewish or Gentile?

Some have held that the [Antichrist](#) will be Jewish in origin. Among the reasons cited for this view are:

1. His acceptance by Israel is thought to imply a Jewish connection (Dan. 9:27; John 5:43).
2. His role as a “false” Messiah (pseudo-Christ).
3. The omission of the tribe of Dan from the 144,000 of Revelation 7+ is inferred as a hint as to his possible origin.<sup>13</sup>
4. He may be key in initiating the rebuilding of the Tribulation [Temple](#) and interpreted as the Messiah who fulfills Zechariah 6:12.
5. The KJV translation refers to “the **God** of his fathers” [emphasis added] (Dan. 11:37) which is thought to be a reference to the true God of the Jews.

There are numerous problems with the reasons given: *First*, they are all *inferences* and not direct statements by Scripture; *Second*, the reference by the KJV to “the God (singular) of his fathers” is a translation of the Hebrew word *elohim* which is plural. Depending upon the context, it can be rendered as either “gods” or as “God” (a plural of majesty, possibly hinting at the Trinity). Many other translations (e.g., ASV, NASB, KJ2000, NIV84) render it as “gods” in Daniel 11:37 so it is not sound to place undue emphasis upon this detail of the text. Price gives additional reasons against supposing a Jewish origin.

Does the person who rebuilds the Temple have to be considered the Messiah? Note that neither the Jewish governor Zerubbabel nor the Judean king Herod—both of whom rebuilt the Second Temple—were thought by the Jewish people to be the Messiah. . . the Gentile Persian emperor Cyrus. . . made possible the rebuilding of the Second Temple through his edict. . . It is an outsider who has to sign a legal document [Dan. 9:27] with the Jewish people, not one of their own. . . since the object of Satan’s attacks during the Tribulation are all ethnic Jews (Rev. 12:13<sup>+</sup>), it would seem unlikely that the one Satan empowers would also be Jewish (Rev. 13:2<sup>+</sup>). . . it would be contrary to the prophetic sequence of Daniel to have a Jewish kingdom (Dan. 2:32-45; Rom. 11:25). . . to say that the Antichrist is to be a Jew would contradict the very nature of the times of the Gentiles. . . two different beasts are described as arising from the ‘sea’ and the ‘earth.’ The ‘sea’ is a literary image that often indicates the ‘Gentile nations’ (Dan. 7:2-3). This would mean that its opposite term here, ‘earth,’ would refer to ‘the Jews.’ There is support for this in that the Greek word can be used as a technical expression for ‘the land of Israel.’ If this is so, then the first beast, which is from the sea, the Antichrist, is Gentile. And the second beast, the false prophet, is Jewish. . . . While Zec. 6:12 indicates that the Messiah (‘the Branch’) will build the Temple, Zechariah is referring to the Millennial Temple. This allows for the Third (Tribulation) Temple to be built by someone else. . . the text of Rev. 11:2<sup>+</sup> that identifies the Antichrist with the Temple in its desecration does so in terms of Gentile occupation of the site.<sup>14</sup>

But the main reason to oppose this notion is found in a direct deduction from an explicit statement of Scripture which supports his Gentile origin (Dan. 9:27 coupled with the facts of the Roman overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D. 70).

That the Antichrist is to be a Gentile is seen first by looking at *biblical typology*. The only biblical type of the Antichrist is given in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes, a Gentile. . . . Another argument for the Gentile nature of the Antichrist is found in *biblical imagery*. Whenever the word *sea* is used symbolically in the Scriptures, especially in the book of Revelation, it is a symbol of the Gentile nations. Since the Beast of Revelation 13:1-10<sup>+</sup> rises out of the sea, and since the sea represents the Gentile nations (Rev. 17:15<sup>+</sup>), this points to the Antichrist as being of Gentile origin. . . . It is agreed by most Premillennialists that the Times of the Gentiles does not end until the Second Coming of Messiah. It is further agreed that the Antichrist is the final ruler of the Times of the Gentiles . . . if this is so, how then can a Jew be the last ruler when only the Gentiles can have the pre-eminence? . . . not only does the Bible reveal the fact that the Antichrist is to be a Gentile, **it also reveals the very nationality of the Antichrist. The nationality of the Antichrist can be deduced from Daniel 9:26-27.** . . . The obvious conclusion, then, is that the Antichrist is a Gentile of Roman origin. [emphasis added]<sup>15</sup>

#### 4.2.4 - Highly Intelligent

A notable characteristic of the [Beast](#) will be his great intelligence. Daniel describes him as a horn (kingly power) which had “eyes like the eyes of a man” (Dan. 7:8, 20). Eyes are often mentioned in connection with *intelligence* (Eze. 1:18; 10:12; Rev. 1:14<sup>+</sup>; 2:18<sup>+</sup>; 5:6<sup>+</sup>). Being empowered by Satan (2Th. 2:9; Rev. 13:4<sup>+</sup>), he may be the most intelligent man, with the exception of Jesus, ever to have walked the planet. Scripture records, “Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule” (Dan. 8:24). These are characteristics common to many of the ruthless personalities who have squandered the lives of millions upon the stage of history, but in the beast we find the ultimate effort that Satan can put forth in the way of cunning.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4.2.5 - Master Imitator

In keeping with his title of [“Antichrist,”](#) he will be an imitator of Christ (e.g., the object of worship, worldwide dominion, a throne). This tendency to imitate must be seen as an indicator of his Satanic empowerment (Dan. 8:24; 2Th. 2:9; Rev. 13:2<sup>+</sup>). Pink masterfully contrasts Christ and Satan providing an indication of the extent of the devil’s tendency toward imitation.

Do we read of Christ going forth to sow the ‘good seed’ (Mat. 13:24), then we also read of the enemy going forth to sow his ‘tares’ - an imitation wheat (Mat. 13:25). Do we read of ‘the children of God,’ then we also read of ‘the children of the wicked one’ (Mat. 13:38). Do we read of God working in His children ‘both to will and to do of His good pleasure’ (Php. 2:13), then we are also told that the Prince of the power of the air is ‘the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience’ (Eph. 2:2). Do we read of the Gospel of God, then we also read that Satan has a gospel - ‘Another gospel, which is not another’ (Gal. 1:6, 7). Did Christ appoint ‘apostles,’ then Satan has his apostles too (2Cor. 11:13). Are we told that ‘the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God’ (1Cor. 2:10), then Satan also provides his ‘deep things’ (see Greek of Rev. 2:24<sup>+</sup>). Are we told that God, by His angel, will ‘seal’ His servants in their foreheads (Rev. 7:3<sup>+</sup>), so also we read that Satan, by his angels, will set a mark in the foreheads of his devotees (Rev. 13:16<sup>+</sup>). Does the Father seek ‘worshippers’ (John 4:23), so also does Satan (Rev. 13:4<sup>+</sup>). Did Christ quote scripture, so also

did Satan (Mat. 4:6). Is Christ the Light of the world, then Satan also is transformed as an ‘angel of light’ (2Cor. 11:14). Is Christ denominated ‘the Lion of the tribe of Judah’ (Rev. 5:5<sup>+</sup>), then the Devil is also referred to as ‘a roaring lion’ (1Pe. 5:6). Do we read of Christ and ‘His angels’ (Mat. 24:31), then we also read of the Devil and ‘his angels’ (Mat. 25:41). Did Christ work miracles, so also will Satan (2Th. 2:9). Is Christ seated upon a ‘Throne,’ so also will Satan be (Rev. 2:13<sup>+</sup>, Gk.). Has Christ a Church, then Satan has his ‘synagogue’ (Rev. 2:9<sup>+</sup>). Has Christ a ‘bride,’ then Satan has his ‘whore’ (Rev. 17:16<sup>+</sup>). Has God His ‘Vine,’ so has Satan (Rev. 14:19<sup>+</sup>). Does God have a city, the new Jerusalem, then Satan has a city, Babylon (Rev. 17:5<sup>+</sup>; 18:2<sup>+</sup>). Is there a ‘mystery of godliness’ (1Ti. 3:16), so also there is a ‘mystery of iniquity’ (2Th. 2:7). Does God have an only-begotten Son, so we read of ‘the Son of Perdition’ (2Th. 2:3). Is Christ called ‘the Seed of the woman,’ then the Antichrist will be ‘the seed of the serpent’ (Gen. 3:15). Is the Son of God also the Son of Man, then the son of Satan will also be the ‘Man of Sin’ (2Th. 2:3). Is there a Holy Trinity, then there is also an Evil Trinity (Rev. 20:10<sup>+</sup>).<sup>17</sup>

The Antichrist occupies the role of “the son” in the ultimate mimic, the so-called “unholy trinity.”

Is there a Holy Trinity, then there is also an Evil Trinity (Rev. 20:10<sup>+</sup>). In this Trinity of Evil Satan himself is supreme, just as in the Blessed Trinity the Father is (governmentally) supreme: note that Satan is several times referred to as a father (John 8:44, etc.). Unto his son, the Antichrist, Satan gives his authority and power to represent and act for him (Rev. 13:4<sup>+</sup>) just as God the Son received “all power in heaven and earth” from His Father, and uses it for His glory. The Dragon (Satan) and the Beast (Antichrist) are accompanied by a third, the False Prophet, and just as the third person in the Holy Trinity, the Spirit, bears witness to the person and work of Christ and glorifies Him, so shall the third person in the Evil Trinity bear witness to the person and work of the Antichrist and glorify him (see Rev. 13:11-14<sup>+</sup>).<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.2.6 - Christ versus Antichrist

Pink provides an extensive comparison between Christ and [Antichrist](#).<sup>19</sup>

Contrasts between Christ and Antichrist

Christ	Antichrist
called the Christ (Mat. 16:16)	called the Antichrist (1Jn. 4:3)
the Man of Sorrows (Isa. 53:3)	the Man of Sin (2Th. 2:3)
the Son of God (John 1:34)	the Son of Perdition (2Th. 2:3)
the Seed of woman (Gen. 3:15)	the seed of the Serpent (Gen. 3:15)
the Lamb (Isa. 53:7)	the Beast (Rev. 11:7 <sup>+</sup> )
the Holy One (Mark 1:24)	the Wicked One (2Th. 2:8)
the Truth (John 14:6)	the Lie (John 8:44)
Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6)	profane Prince (Eze. 21:25)
glorious Branch (Isa. 4:2)	abominable Branch (Isa. 14:19)
the Mighty Angel (Rev. 10:1 <sup>+</sup> )	the Angel of the Bottomless Pit (Rev. 9:11 <sup>+</sup> )
the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)	the Idol Shepherd (Zec. 11:17)
the number of His name (the <a href="#">gematria</a> of “Jesus” in the Greek) 888	the number of his name 666 (Rev. 13:18 <sup>+</sup> )
came down from heaven (John 3:13)	comes up out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7 <sup>+</sup> )
came in Another’s Name (John 5:43)	comes in his own name (John 5:43)
came to do the Father’s will (John 6:38)	will do his own will (Dan. 11:36)
energized by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14)	energized by Satan (Rev. 13:4 <sup>+</sup> )
submitted Himself to God (John 5:30)	defies God (2Th. 2:4)
humbled Himself (Php. 2:8)	exalts himself (Dan. 11:37)

honored the God of His fathers (Luke 4:16)	refuses to (Dan. 11:37)
cleansed the temple (John 2:14, 16)	defiles the temple (Mat. 24:15)
ministered to the needy (Isa. 53:7)	robs the poor (Ps. 10:8, 9)
rejected of men (Isa. 53:7)	accepted by men (Rev. 13:4 <sup>+</sup> )
leads the flock (John 10:3)	leaves the flock (Zec. 11:17)
slain for the people (John 11:51)	slays the people (Isa. 14:20)
glorified God on earth (John 17:4)	blasphemes the name of God in heaven (Rev. 13:6 <sup>+</sup> )
received up into heaven (Luke 24:51)	goes down into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20 <sup>+</sup> )

### 4.2.7 - Supernatural Origin?

The most controversial aspect of the [Antichrist](#) concerns his origin. Clearly he is empowered by Satan (Dan. 8:24; 2Th. 2:9). Scripture also records his ascent from the bottomless pit (Abyss, Rev. 11:7<sup>+</sup>; 17:8<sup>+</sup>). As Pink notes above, there is also a striking contrast between the “seed of the woman” and the “seed of the serpent” in various passages. Fruchtenbaum notes his ascent from the bottomless pit and suggests a connection with fallen angels which are also associated with the Abyss: “[The Abyss] is never associated with human beings; it is always associated with fallen angels with the exception of the Antichrist. Since the Antichrist will be conceived by the power of Satan, he is connected with angelic beings and therefore also with the Abyss.”<sup>20</sup> The nature of the Antichrist’s connection with Satan, his origin, and his supernatural powers, have led some to conclude his origin will *mimic*<sup>21</sup> the incarnation of Christ.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the most radical view concerning his emergence from the abyss is that it denotes the possible reincarnation of Judas Iscariot or [Nero](#).<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.2.7.1 - The Timing of His Ascent

Although the previous views are provocative, it seems more likely that the ascent of the beast from the Abyss denotes his revival rather than his conception. His ascent from the Abyss (Rev. 11:7<sup>+</sup>; 17:8<sup>+</sup>) is related as one of a series of events concerning His life history (Rev. 17:8<sup>+</sup>):

1. The beast *was*.
2. The beast *is not*.
3. The beast *will ascend out of the bottomless pit*.
4. The beast *will go into perdition* (Rev. 17:11<sup>+</sup>; 19:20<sup>+</sup>; 20:10<sup>+</sup>).

If the grammatical sequence of Revelation 17:8<sup>+</sup> reflects his actual history, it implies that the beast comes into existence, receives a deadly wound, ascends from the Abyss, and is finally destroyed. His ascent from the Abyss may be connected with his *reappearance* upon the stage of history rather than his initial origin. Scripture indicates that the beast will receive a serious wound which results in his death. His miraculous revival from the wound contributes to his worship:

Woe to the worthless shepherd, who leaves the flock! A sword *shall be* against his arm and against his right eye; his arm shall completely wither, and his right eye shall be totally blinded. (Zec. 11:17)

And *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. (Rev. 13:3<sup>+</sup>)

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. (Rev. 13:14<sup>+</sup>)

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the [Book of Life](#) from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Rev. 17:8<sup>+</sup>)

It seems best to understand the ascent of the beast from the Abyss as denoting the demonic supernatural means by which he

returns from the dead. His restoration from a fatal wound will parallel the resurrection of Christ from the dead and result in even greater worship: "So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?' " (Rev. 13:4<sup>+</sup>)

After his death he will come to life again. When he does, he will come back in a demonic rather than a purely human form to establish his world domination. This explains why the abyss, the abode of demons (Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1<sup>+</sup>, 2<sup>+</sup>, 11<sup>+</sup>) is his origin.<sup>24</sup>

If the restoration of the beast is to result in the greatest impression upon the global population, then it seems his fatal wound must have also been witnessed by these same individuals and that both his initial appearance on the stage of history and his subsequent peril and restoration must take place during the last time. This would preclude the idea that his personal restoration involves the resurrection (or even reincarnation) of the likes of Judas or [Nero](#) who both died many centuries ago and whose restoration would be difficult, if not impossible, to validate. [Preterist interpreters](#) connect the beast's recovery with the *Nero Redivivus Myth* which arose some time after the suicide of Caesar Nero in A.D. 68, but this connection is problematic. See [Revival Myth](#). The mystery surrounding his origin, the nature of his ministry and works, and the extent to which Satan is a Great Imitator will all play a factor in how the beast comes upon the scene. Only time will tell if the imitation will extend to matters of the conception or resurrection of [Antichrist](#).

#### 4.2.8 - Relation to the Pope

If the identity of the [Antichrist](#) were established by popular vote throughout history, the reigning Pope of any given time would undoubtedly be the most popular candidate:

Following Augustine's lead the Reformers took the Scriptures pertaining to the antichrist and the mark of the beast as an allegory of either the Pope, Islam (Constantinople had fallen to the Turks in A.D. 1412), or both. The Waldenses held the Pope to be the antichrist. Wycliffe also was of this opinion as was Tyndale. Luther regarded the Pope and the Turks both as antichrist, . . . Calvin took the Antichrist's desecration of the Temple to be an allegory of the Church and the Pope to be the desecrator, . . . Arminius also held "that the Roman pontiff, who calls himself the head and spouse, though under Christ, is Antichrist."<sup>25</sup>

Although the Papal system is an ever-popular candidate for the beast, we believe that this view falls short of serious consideration on at least two counts:

1. The Antichrist is an *individual* and not a position or system (Dan. 7:8; 7:11, 20-26; 8:23-25; 9:26-27; 11:36-45; John 5:43; 2Th. 2:3-9; 1Jn. 2:18; Rev. 11:7<sup>+</sup>; 13:1-8<sup>+</sup>, 12-18<sup>+</sup>; 14:9-11<sup>+</sup>; 15:2<sup>+</sup>; 16:2<sup>+</sup>, 10<sup>+</sup>, 13<sup>+</sup>; 17:8-13<sup>+</sup>; 19:19-20<sup>+</sup>; 20:4<sup>+</sup>, 10<sup>+</sup>).
2. It appears the Antichrist will be an emerging political leader rather than the existing leader of an established system of religion (Dan. 7:20-25; 8:25; 11:36-39; 2Th. 2:8; Rev. 13:4-5<sup>+</sup>).

Although the last Pope will undoubtedly play an important role—along with all other false religions—in helping to establish the Antichrist and his political system, it is unlikely that the Pope himself will occupy the role of Antichrist. If anything, the last Pope will more likely be related to the [False Prophet](#) (Rev. 13:11<sup>+</sup>), although there are reasons for questioning this association too.<sup>26</sup> Throughout history, the Scriptural teaching regarding Antichrist has continually suffered perversion in service of near-term political or polemic motivations of Christian interpreters of the day who have readily filled the shoes of Antichrist with their opponents. Not mindful of the fact that the church will not be present to watch for the Antichrist (see [Rapture](#)), this trend continues to our own day. If we learn anything from the history of interpretation, we learn that *great patience* is necessary in relation to prophetic passages. Rather than attempting to shoe-horn prophecy into our own near-term experience, we must patiently wait for *God's timing* which alone is sure:

Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision and make *it* plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. 2:2-3)

#### 4.2.9 - A Statesmen's Dream

When the [Beast](#) finally appears on the world stage, he will present an irresistible solution to the troubles of his age. So much so that he will be worshiped by those whose names are not written in the [Book of Life](#) (Rev. 13:4<sup>+</sup>, 8<sup>+</sup>, 12<sup>+</sup>, 15<sup>+</sup>; 14:9<sup>+</sup>, 11<sup>+</sup>; 19:20<sup>+</sup>).

One cannot assert that the "beast" is finally to be equated with any single person or power that has yet appeared. Expositors have identified him with almost every sinister figure known, from Nero to Mussolini. . . . But as the concept of world government becomes more popular, and as world powers gain more territorial influence in every succeeding generation, it is easy to see that the Revelation points the way in which civilization is traveling. One government, materialistic in philosophy and absolutist in character,



ruled by a single political and economic genius, is predicted in Revelation. Such a government, unthinkable a generation or two ago, now seems not too remote a possibility. The dictatorship of one man over the world might be welcomed if he could offer some assurance of universal peace and prosperity. What seemed like a dream to statesmen of yesterday is prophesied in this book, and as the years roll by it comes closer and closer to fulfillment.<sup>27</sup>

For additional information on the Beast and his relationship to other kings and kingdoms, see [Beasts, Heads, and Horns](#) and [#16 - Beast](#).

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Randall Price, [“Antichrist,”](#) in Mal Couch, ed., [Dictionary of Premillennial Theology](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 43.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), rev ed (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 207.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Randall Price, [“Jewish Views of the Antichrist,”](#) in Mal Couch, ed., [Dictionary of Premillennial Theology](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 47.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>6</sup>Geoffrey Wigoder, ed., [Encyclopedia Judaica CDROM Edition Version 1.0](#) (Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1997), s.v. “Armilus.”

<sup>7</sup>Raphael Patai, [The Messiah Texts](#) (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 156.

<sup>8</sup>“Remarkable in the statement of one version of the Midrash that he is called ‘Antichrist.’ ”—Ibid., 157.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 158-159.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>11</sup>Price, [Jewish Views of the Antichrist](#), 49.

<sup>12</sup>“That man will be of the Children of Ephraim. . . . who says, ‘I am the Messiah your king and your prince. . . . (Ma’ase Daniel, pp. 222-25).’”—Patai, [The Messiah Texts](#), 163.

<sup>13</sup>“Hippolytus (*Commentary on the Benedictions of Isaac and Jacob* [Gen. 49:14]) . . . began the Christian tradition that the Antichrist originates from the Israelite tribe of Dan . . . [He] apparently made this connection from the Jewish Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs . . . which states that evil spirits would be active in the tribe . . . that Satan was their prince . . . and that they would be hostile in the future to the tribes of Levi and Judah.”—Price, [Jewish Views of the Antichrist](#), 49.

<sup>14</sup>Randall Price, [The Coming Last Days Temple](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1999), 477-480.

<sup>15</sup>Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 212-213.

<sup>16</sup>“In Dan. 7:20 he is represented as ‘A horn that had eyes.’ It is a double symbol. The ‘horn’ prefigures strength; ‘eyes’ speak of intelligence. Again, in Dan. 8:23 he is referred to as ‘A King of fierce countenance.’ who shall ‘understand dark sentences.’ That which baffles others shall be simple to him. The Hebrew word here translated ‘dark sentences’ is the same as the one rendered ‘hard questions’ in 1 Kings 10:1, where we read of the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon with her ‘hard questions’ in order to test his wisdom. It is also the word that is used in Samson’s riddle in Judges 14. It indicates that the Antichrist will be master of all the secrets of occult science. Eze. 28:3 declares of him ‘Beholding, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee.’ This will be one of his most alluring attractions. His master mind will captivate the educated world. His marvelous store of knowledge, his acquaintance with the secrets of nature, his superhuman powers of perception, will stamp him as an intellectual genius of the first magnitude.”—Arthur Walkington Pink, [The Antichrist](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. “The Genius and Character of the Antichrist.”

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., s.v. “The Antichrist Will be the Son of Satan.”

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>[Ibid., s.v. “Comparisons between Christ and the Antichrist”] (We do not necessarily agree with every Scriptural identification of

the Antichrist made by Pink.)

<sup>20</sup>Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 749.

<sup>21</sup>The word *mimic* is supremely important in this statement. For it appears that only the *Creator* has the necessary power to bring forth *creatures*. God alone has true life-giving power: Job 27:3; 33:4; Eze. 37:9, 14; John 6:63; Rev. 11:11<sup>+</sup>. Whatever Satan achieves will not be the true creation of life, but the perversion of that which God has already established as part of the system of life. "Satan does not have the power to give life. Since Christ alone has the power of resurrection, Satan could not bring one back to life."—J. Dwight Pentecost, [Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 335. However, "The question of whether Satan has the power to restore a dead person to life (Walvoord) requires no answer here. Whether the beast performs this marvelous feat through deception or through power permitted by God, it still brings him into the limelight as never before."—Robert L. Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 13:3.

<sup>22</sup>"If the Seed of the Woman is Messiah, the seed of Satan can only be the Antichrist. From this passage [Gen. 3:15], then, it can be deduced that Satan will counterfeit the virgin conception and will some day impregnate a Roman woman who will give birth to Satan's seed who is going to be the Antichrist. The woman herself may not be a virgin, but the conception of Antichrist will be through the supernatural power of Satan. By this means, the Antichrist will have a supernatural origin. Another passage dealing with this is II Thessalonians 2:9. . . The Greek word translated *working* is the word *energeo*, which means 'to energize.' His coming, then, will be brought about by the energizing of Satan. . . . A time is coming when the situation of Genesis six [Gen. 6:4] will be repeated. A fallen angelic being, this time Satan himself, will impregnate a Gentile woman of Roman origin who will then give birth to Satan's son. The end-product will be a counterfeit god-man."—Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 215-216. We would depart from Dr. Fruchtenbaum's interpretation here. It is our view that one simply cannot make a clear case for this provocative idea on the basis of Scripture. There is much one could say, but for one thing, the "seed of Satan" need not refer to physical offspring, but rather spiritual children (Mat. 13:38; John 8:41-43; Acts 13:10; 1 Jn. 3:10).

<sup>23</sup>"We have the first reference to 'the Beast' in the Apocalypse: 'The Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit.' Here the Antichrist is seen issuing forth from the Abyss. What is the Abyss? It is the abode of lost spirits, the place of their incarceration and torment - see Rev. 20:1-3<sup>+</sup>, and Luke 8:31, 'deep' is the 'abyss' and cf. Mat. 9:28. The question naturally arises, How did he get there? and when was he sent there? We answer, When Judas Iscariot died! The Antichrist will be Judas Iscariot reincarnated. In proof of this we appeal to Acts 1:25 where we are told, 'that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.' Of no one else in all the Bible is it said that at death he went 'to his own place.' Put these two scriptures together: Judas went 'to his own place,' the Beast ascends out of the Abyss."—Pink, [The Antichrist](#), s.v. "The Antichrist Will Be Judas Reincarnated." "Some have held that the Beast will be the reincarnation of Nero."—Pentecost, [Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology](#), 335. "But there would be little point in a resurrected Judas; how would anyone recognize him, since no one would know what he looked like?"—John MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 13:2. "Victorinus, voicing an impression that was very common in early Christian centuries, says, 'Nero will be raised from the dead, appear again at Rome and persecute the Church once more, and finally be destroyed by the Messiah.' Augustine first mentioned this idea concerning Nero. Even Tacitus, the Roman historian, spoke of many believing rumors about Nero's possible return . . . Sulpicius Severus said, 'It is current opinion of many that he (Nero) is yet to come as Antichrist.' Note carefully, we are not insisting at all that Nero will be the Antichrist, but that the early Christians believed that a Roman imperial persecutor, possibly Nero, would be the Antichrist."—William R. Newell, [Revelation: Chapter by Chapter](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 200.

<sup>24</sup>Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 17:8.

<sup>25</sup>Hal Harless, "666: The Beast and His Mark in Revelation 13," in [The Conservative Theological Journal](#), vol. 7 no. 22 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, December 2003), 347.

<sup>26</sup>"The second beast which is described, Rev. 13:11-17<sup>+</sup>, as coming out of the earth, and having two horns like unto a lamb, and speaking as a dragon, and exercising all the authority of the first beast in his sight, is referred to the papacy. The falseprophet receives a similar application. So Luther, Vitringa, Bengel, Auberlen, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, and many English divines."—Philip Schaff and David Schley Schaff, [History of the Christian Church](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997, 1916), 1.xii.101. Some commentators interpret the reference to the false prophet "coming up out of the earth [or land]" (Rev. 13:11<sup>+</sup>) as a possible reference to his Jewish origin. If the last Pope were to be the false prophet, then a Jewish Pope is always a possibility.

<sup>27</sup>Merrill C. Tenney, [Interpreting Revelation](#) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1957), 189.

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