

# A Biblical View OF THE END TIMES

## THE RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST, PART 5

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### REVIEW:

- We've been studying the rise of the antichrist for the past few lessons. We've seen this is a gradual process and not an 'overnight event.'
- There are a series of things that must come into play for the antichrist's ascent. According to the Bible, some of those things are:
  - The supernatural rapture of the church. For the antichrist to debut on the world stage and begin his political ascent, the impact and ministry of the Holy Spirit **through** the church must **first** be removed.
  - That happens at the rapture (**Cf. 2 Thess. 2:6-7**), and this Biblical order of events – **first** the rapture, **then** the rise of the antichrist - is one reason why the mid-Trib and post-Trib rapture positions face real challenges.
  - Then there are all the counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders which support the antichrist's rise (**Cf. 2 Thess. 2:9**).
  - There is also 'THE lie' which will reinforce the antichrist's legitimacy in the unsaved world's eyes. It will be very convincing.
  - This is a **supernatural** deception Satan will use to counter the **supernatural** truth of the rapture. I believe it has much to do with the return of the fallen angels into the physical sphere of earth and humanity.

**NOTE:** And today, we'll learn of another element that is critical to the antichrist's rise on the world stage. That is this false, one-world, religious system which will emerge and spread rapidly in the wake of the rapture. I have referred to this as the **GROWL** – or the Genocidal Religious, One World, Lie. All those points of that acronym will be true....

### BACKGROUND AND BASIC POINTS:

In **Revelation Ch. 17**, John is in the company of one of the seven angels who carried out the final bowl judgments – these are the last series of judgments before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (**READ vss. 1-6**).

- The angel tells John that he is going to be shown something.
  - Specifically, in **vs. 1**, John is going to be shown "*the punishment of the great prostitute.*"
  - We will discover from *this* chapter that this great prostitute is a symbol of this final false one-world religious system, or the '**GROWL**,' and already, the analogy of a prostitute is not a good thing.

- The angel explains in **vs. 2** that this prostitute – this ‘**GROWL**’ – has many customers and supporters. It has a strong and extensive foundation.
  - Its support is found in “*the kings of the earth*” as well as “*the inhabitants of the earth*” (again – in **vs. 2**). So, this is a top-down religious system that impacts all strata of earth’s population.
  - Lastly, this one-world false religion, this “prostitute,” has “intoxicated” her followers.
  - In other words, they are not of sound reason. They have been deceived. They are witless and foolish. They will believe anything **but** the truth.
- So, John is transported in a vision – with this angel – to a desert. This place has no distractions. God wants to make sure John’s attentions are focused.
    - And it’s in this desert that John sees this woman – this “prostitute” – this false one-world religious system, this ‘**GROWL**,’ on full display.
  - And John learns several things about this woman right away:
    - **First**, she is sitting on a scarlet beast that is covered with blasphemous names (**vs. 3**). We know from the context that this scarlet beast is the antichrist (and the people around him).
      - ✓ Said another way, this one-world religious system is being supported by this beast.
      - ✓ But put more poignantly, there is a co-dependence between this ‘prostitute’ and this ‘beast.’

**NOTE:** This “prostitute,” or this false, global, murderous religious system (this ‘**GROWL**’) - will benefit from the debut and rise of the antichrist. In the same way, the antichrist, this scarlet beast, will benefit from this false religion. They will need each other for a period.

- **The second thing John notices is**, this woman – this false one-world religious system – is lavishly decorated in finery.
  - ✓ She’s clothed in purple and scarlet (typically colors and styles representing great power, authority, and prominence).
  - ✓ She glitters with pearls, precious stones, and gold (**vs. 4**). There is a lot of pomp and show, and razzle and dazzle here, but there is also a great deal of wealth and resources.
  - ✓ I would suggest that these resources are things which are not sudden, but which have been accumulated over a great period of time.
  - ✓ This prostitute holds a cup in her hands, and it is filled with abominable things. Said another way, she is advancing and she is offering lies, apostasies, and deceptions.
- **The third thing John learns** is this “prostitute’s” roots go back a long ways.
  - ✓ In **vs. 5** she traces her origins back to “*Babylon the Great*.”

- ✓ The foundation of this final false one-world religious systems is ancient AND occultic.
- ✓ Whatever this final false one-world religious system (this '**GROWL**') will be, one thing is certain: it is based upon the original deceptions which God Himself had to deal with back at the origins of Babylon (more on that later).
- ✓ And this Babylonian source has been the mother – the **origin** - of all prostitutes (or ALL false religions) that have plagued the world and contended with the truth since earliest times.
- ✓ Down in **vs. 15**, we read that this prostitute has an impact on everyone in the world at this future point in time: "...peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages."
- ✓ This '**GROWL**' will infect – or has ALREADY infected - all cultures and societies. It is ecumenical. It has gathered all belief systems under one structure.

**NOTE:** May I add here that when you see the bumper stickers that form the word "COEXIST" with different religious symbols - - when you hear the Pope and different denominations and church leaders calling for interfaith cooperation, or when you consider Abu Dhabi's stunning interfaith religious complex (The Abrahamic Family House), you are seeing this passion already to gather all religions under one banner.

- **The fourth thing John** sees is stated in **vs. 6**. This "prostitute," this '**GROWL**,' this global false religion hates true believers in Jesus Christ.
  - ✓ In **vs. 6** we are told, "*the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.*"
  - ✓ This false religious system is murderous. It is genocidal. And we will learn this is not anything new for it. It has been a pattern.

**NOTE:** OK – that's the basics. I put a few stakes in the ground. Now, let's back up and do a slower drive-by. Let's unpack a few more details behind each of these things.

- Now - - - this beast that this prostitute is riding on has seven heads and ten horns.
  - ✓ We don't have to debate what or who the beast is because the angel makes it clear to John in **vss. 8-13** that the beast which is supporting this prostitute is, in fact, the antichrist.
  - ✓ This conclusion is one that shows "*a mind with wisdom*" (**vs. 9**). One mark of wisdom here is accepting the facts for what they are.
  - ✓ Put another way, it is wisdom which accepts the straightforward truth and explanations of Scripture - - whether we are talking about the Nephilim, the distinction between Israel and the church, the Rapture, the antichrist, or anything else that God's Word is clear on.
  - ✓ It is foolishness to take issue with anything the Bible makes clear to us.

**NOTE:** The details of the angel's explanation about the beast conform well to other parts of God's Word where we learn specific details about the antichrist and his career (more on all this later).

But here are some points about the antichrist, and the arrangement between he and this '**GROWL**' that I want to briefly mention now:

1. It is clear from the angel's explanation that the beast is a "he" (**vss. 10 and 11**).
  - The antichrist is not a 'system.' It is an individual, specifically male.
  - He **USES** a system, he **USES** politics, he **USES** technology, and so on, but "he" is an actual person or individual.
2. "He" rules over the entire earth right up to the time of the Lord's return (**vss. 8 and 14**)
  - "He" wars against Jesus Christ who will in fact conquer him, and...
3. "He" has a structure of governance which is – in some way – recognized by ten parts.
  - He's got 10 individuals who function "*as kings*" under him (**vs. 12**). It is through these 10 individuals that the antichrist essentially controls the world.
  - There may be 10 territories into which the world is divided at that point in time, but it's important to understand the Bible does not specifically say that.
  - Rather, the Bible calls out these 10 individuals which function "*AS kings*," and they are alluded to in other parts of Scripture as "*ten horns*" (**Cf. Dan. 7:7**) or "*ten crowns*" (**Cf. Rev. 13:1**).
  - The common thread among the terminology of "horns," "crowns," or being "*as kings*" is a picture of power, strength, influence, and so on.
  - Remember, in **Dan. 7:8**, the antichrist is pictured as a "*little horn*" which arises up from among a pre-existing group of "*ten horns*." That will take some time.
  - Eventually, three of these original horns are "*plucked up by their roots*." We can conclude from this that at some point during the second half of the Tribulation, three of these "kings" are somehow done away with or discarded in the antichrist's power structure.
4. It's clear from a plain reading of **Revelation 17** that the beast upon which the prostitute rides and is supported is, in fact, the antichrist. But notice some cryptic things about him, and I just want to mention them for now....
  - **Vs. 8**, says he, "*once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss.*"
  - In John's time – at the writing of **Revelation** - the antichrist did not exist, but he had in existed in some form before that point, and he would exist once again.
  - He is also associated in some close relationship with the "*Abyss*." In some manner, he emerges "*up out of it*."
  - In fact, the unsaved world will be "*astonished*" when they see the antichrist. Why? Once again, in **vs. 8**, it is because he once WAS, and NOW is not, but will YET come again.

- This issue is given another clue in **vs. 11**. There, we are told, *“The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.”*
  - I believe the Bible is telling us a two-fold bit of information here. We will learn the antichrist dies and comes back to life. So that may play in a bit here.
  - But I think the Bible is also suggesting the antichrist is, in fact, a physical return of a former historical figure – someone the unsaved world will know of, and that is why they are so *“astonished.”* He’s back! (more on all this later...).
5. Now - - the relationship between the prostitute (again - - this is a representation of this final false genocidal one-world religion) and the beast (again - - this is the antichrist) is a **temporary** one.
- It is an arrangement that serves a purpose only for a time. And that is from a point just after the Rapture up through the midpoint of the Tribulation.
  - In **Rev. 17:16**, we see that the antichrist and his 10 kings secretly hate this false one-world religion.
  - There may be some sort of political alliance or mutual understanding between the two sides for a period, but underneath it all, the antichrist cannot stand the situation.
  - At a particular point, the antichrist and his 10 kings will turn on this false one-world religion.
    - ✓ They may have supported it for a time, but they will eventually discontinue this arrangement.
    - ✓ We know from other parts of God’s Word that this arrangement only lasts up through the first half of the Tribulation, for 3 ½ years.
    - ✓ At that juncture, they will destroy this **‘GROWL’** completely. The graphic details of **vs. 16** suggest it will not be a quiet overthrow. It will be traumatic, violent - - and in every way, it will be hostile.
    - ✓ This one-world false religion that will have emerged immediately in the wake of the Rapture, and which will have been supported by the rising political power of the antichrist, will be suddenly done away with.
    - ✓ And here’s another important point to consider, this one-world false religion is headquartered in a *“city”* (**Cf. vs. 18**) that is also known in John’s time as having *‘seven hills’* (**Cf. vs. 9**).
6. Now, let’s get back to the destruction of this **‘GROWL.’** It is most reasonable to conclude that the details of **vs. 16** most likely to occur at the midpoint of The Tribulation. I mentioned this a moment ago, but why?
- ✓ According to **Dan. 9:27**, it’s at the middle of the Tribulation when the antichrist stops Jewish religious practices and he sets up self-worship.
  - ✓ So, this vision of the harlot riding the scarlet beast in **Rev. Ch. 17** is a look backwards. While **Revelation** largely moves in a chronological timeline (as we’ve learned), **Chap. 17** is a ‘pause, and look around, and look back’ to catch things up.

- ✓ According to **Rev. 13:5-8**, the period that the inhabitants of the earth **worship the beast** is 42 months. That calculates out to 3 ½ years, or the second half of the Tribulation.
- ✓ Jesus Himself prophetically warned the Jews about the events of the midpoint of the Tribulation in His Olivet Discourse. That's when the antichrist sets up the "*abomination of desolation*."
- ✓ It's passages like these that make it clear it's at the halfway point of the Tribulation that the antichrist destroys the one-world religion, nullifies the terms of the covenant that he confirmed with Israel, and sets up himself as the only one to be worshipped.

**NOTE:** Now, with all that 'under our belt,' let's go back to see how the Roman Empire of Jesus' time evolved. This is a high-altitude history lesson (it may be difficult for some of you to hear):

- a. Rome, of Jesus' time, was dominated militarily and politically by its western leg in the European arena, and it was headquartered in Rome.
- b. Over time, that western leg of the Roman empire fell into decay. Around 330 AD, Emperor Constantine the Great moved the capital to the ancient city of Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople (today: Istanbul, Turkey).
- c. Emperor Constantine also legalized Christianity, and many scholars argue that the Roman Catholic faith actually began in Constantinople.
- d. About a hundred years or so later, the western leg of the Roman Empire was mostly done. Historians regard Sept. 4, 476 AD as when the last true Roman emperor in Rome was removed from power.
- e. The Middle Ages began at this juncture, and they lasted for about 1,000 years. They were also known as the 'Dark Ages.' This was a time when entire cultures and nations were kept ignorant of spiritual truth by the powerful and oppressive Catholic leadership.
- f. Starting around 476 AD, the western leg of the Roman empire fragmented into various Germanic people groups that conquered and carved up the original territory. A patchwork of regional kingdoms emerged. Meantime, the eastern leg of the Roman empire continued this entire time.
- g. The western leg of the Roman empire was eventually reunited – a few hundred years later - under the coronation of Charlemagne around 800 AD by Pope Leo III.
- h. By that point, it was officially known as the Holy Roman Empire. Various historical records referred to it at this time as the 'Holy Roman Catholic Empire' due to its incestuous association with the church.
- i. Its eastern leg, meanwhile, continued to endure and thrive, and it did not fall till around May of 1453 AD, when Constantinople (Istanbul) was conquered by the Ottoman Empire.
- j. By this point however, the city of Rome was fully controlled by the papacy. The Roman Catholic Church had been operating with strong papal authority long before the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire fell.
- k. The Holy Roman Catholic Empire eventually became known as the Roman Catholic Church - - - and now it is simply known as the Catholic Church.

- l. Today, the Catholic Church is worldwide, it embraces globalism, socialism, open borders, and the climate change agenda. It will not call homosexuality a sin, and its leaders openly embrace evolution.
- m. The COVID 'vaccine,' BTW, was heavily promoted by Catholic leadership, with Pope Francis even calling it a 'moral obligation' and an 'act of love.'
- n. The leadership of the Catholic Church is strongly ecumenical – it is on clear record for wanting to blend all religions. The word 'Catholic,' in fact, means 'universal.'
- o. The highest leadership of the Catholic Church is also occultic, they are actively seeking 'alien life,' and they believe aliens will soon arrive. They have advanced many millions of dollars into their telescope and observatory systems (EX: Arizona). Catholic leadership is on record for wanting to 'baptize the aliens when they come.'
- p. The Catholic Church has – historically – been very hostile to true believers in Jesus Christ. There are multiple times in history when the Catholic church persecuted and killed masses of true believers in large inquisitions.
- q. The Catholic Church today is an extremely wealthy organization. It has invested hundreds of millions of dollars into the goal of bringing everyone in all parts of the world under a new concept of the Catholic Church - one where people of different faith persuasions are a part of it.

**NOTE:** If you are uncomfortable with anything I have stated here – then you need to do your homework. If you do that responsibly, you will find all I have shared to be true, and I've hardly scratched the surface of what you may discover. The entire picture is disturbing.

**NOTE:** But - what we learn from this high-altitude history lesson are **four** things that pertain in one or more ways to the Biblical narrative:

1. **First**, the Roman Empire never fully went away. It morphed and it changed. It adapted and it found ways to survive. But it was never fully and completely conquered all at once.
2. **Second**, the Catholic Church of today, still headquartered in Rome, can essentially trace its roots back to the Roman Empire of Jesus' time (the Vatican was formally recognized as a sovereign state in 1929).
3. **Third**, the Catholic Church today holds to multiple beliefs and practices which are not Biblical. Consequently, many people who are Catholics are not truly saved – some are, but I believe this latter group is in the profound minority.
4. **And fourth**, the Roman Empire, represented by the two iron legs of the metallic statue King Nebuchadnezzar dreamt about in **Dan. Ch. 2**, will – in one form or another - endure to the very end, as represented by the ten toes of "*iron and clay*" in **Dan. 2:41-43**. It won't be 'revived;' it's always been here.
5. Most Bible prophecy scholars see a connection here between the 10 toes, the 10 crowns, the 10 horns, and the 10 'kings.' That's a reasonable assumption...

**Now, let's take a deep breath... or two. We need to summarize what we've learned the past few weeks, and in that process we need to start connecting some important dots:**

- A false one-world religion will emerge and grow quickly after the Rapture. This false one-world religion is an ancient belief system that will be infused with many New Age / occultic / and 'alien' beliefs – even tracing its origins all the way back to Babylon in those respects.
- It will seek to explain away the Biblical rapture, and all sorts of '*counterfeit miracles signs and wonders*' will be part of that deception. It will do all it can to bury the truth.
- This "prostitute," this false one-world religion that will arise after the rapture, will "intoxicate" her followers according to **Rev. 17:2**. In other words, they will not have sound reason.
- They will be deceived. They will be foolish, and they will choose to believe anything BUT the truth.
- It will be a false religion that is closely tied to the rise of the antichrist – and vice versa. In fact, for a period, these two elements are interdependent.
- The relationship between the two - for a while - appears to be mutually beneficial. They need each other to achieve their individual agendas.
- That said, the antichrist, together with his 10 kings, secretly HATE this false one-world religious system underneath it all.
- The Bible says in **Rev. 17:16** that they will destroy this one-world false religion at a key point. It will be a very violent overthrow.
- That point is halfway through the Tribulation, at which point the antichrist will also terminate the Jewish religious practices too.
- After the antichrist overthrows the one-world religious system AND the Jewish sacrificial system, there will be no religious competition. He will then demand self-worship.
- But until that point, this false religion will be one that is arrayed in finery: scarlet and purple, pearls, gold, and precious stones. Putting that another way, these elements are part of the **brand** of this false one-world religious system. It is one that is abundant with riches, rituals, and pomp.
- It will be a false religion that will reinforce many foolish humanistic ideas that have gained root today, and it will promote globalism and all the ideas that go with that.
- It will actively promote itself as ecumenical; it will seek to blend all religions under one umbrella.
- **BUT** it will be very intolerant of true Biblical faith in Jesus Christ. As a result, it will persecute and murder many true saints of God.
- The campaign of genocide which is the agenda of this one-world false religion results in the pleas for justice of the martyred saints in the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal Judgment.
- It is this future campaign of genocide that the Bible also calls an "*overflowing scourge*" in **Isaiah Ch. 28**. It is this same campaign of genocide which is also detailed in the 4<sup>th</sup> Seal Judgment in **Rev. Ch. 6** with the riders of 'Death' and 'Hades.'
- It is this "overflowing scourge" that Israel will want to be INSULATED from as she seeks to set up the INSTITUTION of the temple and its sacrificial system.
- These elements will be a key inclusion of the covenant that the antichrist will confirm with Israel. It is this covenant which starts the seven years of The Tribulation.



- Those who have already “rejected the love of the truth that would have saved them” will fall for all these swirling lies and deceptions, AKA this “powerful delusion.”
- We’ve seen how the Bible makes the case that there will be – during this time of the rise of the antichrist and the surge of this genocidal false one-world religious system – a return of the days of Noah - - a return of the fallen angels into the physical sphere of human events.
- We’ve noted – and we’ve quoted - the writings of various occultic and new age leaders that are ALREADY receiving messages from these dark entities, and who are ALREADY preparing a false explanation about the Rapture, about the onset of the Tribulation, and about their own return to earth.
- We’ve seen that this future false one-world false religious system will be one that quickly emerges from its foundation that is already established across the globe.
- In **vs. 15 of Rev. Ch. 17**, we read that this prostitute has an impact on a global population: “...peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages.” This false religion will invade all cultures and societies.
- It will, in fact, have power ‘*over one fourth of the earth*’ as we’ve learned. This false one world religious system is pictured as a prostitute with many customers and supporters.
- This false religious system will hate the truth of the Gospel, and it will particularly hate the Jews and the Christians.
- And according to God’s Word – in **Rev. Ch. 17** - this future one-world religious system has shown all these same practices, genocidal activities, and prejudices before.

**NOTE:** That’s a healthy review, but I want to point out a critical thread that weaves through this entire picture. I want you to see **through spiritual eyes** what is really happening here - - what is really being shown to us:

1. The Bible says Satan fell from his place as the highest created being because he wanted to be above God and to be worshipped as God (**Cf. Isaiah 14:12-17**)
2. Satan has never changed in that desire to be worshipped as “God” above all else - - he laid all kinds of tempting proposals in front of Jesus in an effort to achieve this goal (**Cf. Matthew 4:1-11**)
3. All the false religions of the world are designed in some way to take worship of Jesus Christ away and redirect it to Satan’s occultic agenda (**Cf. Rev. 17:5**).
4. The one world false religious system that will emerge in the wake of the Rapture, and after the Restraining power of the Holy Spirit has been removed, will be directly reinforced by Satan’s power.
7. Again, in **2 Thess. 2:9**, it says Satan will employ “all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders” to support this powerful delusion.
8. Make no mistake: Satan is heavily invested into seeing this false one-world religious system come about.
  - ✓ It will keep people from seeing and seeking the truth about the Gospel.
  - ✓ It will deceive many because Satan is “the father of lies” (**Cf. John 8:44**)

- ✓ It will try to explain away the Rapture and the clear facts of God's Word.
9. But it's all still a step or two away from what Satan most covets - - and that is the direct worship of himself.
  10. Satan takes everything in steps. Getting the global religion out of the way and setting up the antichrist to be worshipped gets much closer to achieving Satan's original goal.
  11. Satan's almost at the point of being visibly worshipped by all the inhabitants of the earth.
  12. But that is as far as he gets. Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. Satan's goal of being DIRECTLY worshipped never comes to total fruition.

**NEXT WEEK:** We'll unpack a few more elements about this future false one-world religious system and how it has a clear connection to the rise of the antichrist. The Bible has more to say about all this.

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Second, don't teach what is NOT there. Don't force a passage to mean something it really doesn't.

And – number three, if the Bible states it plainly, we should too.

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