

RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST II

Revelation 13:1-10

In our previous study we were thinking about this long period of time in human history called the *Times of the Gentiles*. Please reference the *Times of the Gentiles* chart on page two of your notes. The *Times of the Gentiles* stretches from 586 B.C. to the end of the Tribulation. Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 reveal that from God's prophetic perspective, four Gentile empires dominate Jerusalem over the course of the *Times of the Gentiles*.

We discovered that the first three Gentile empires - the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Hellenistic – were represented symbolically by animals – a lion, bear and leopard. The fourth Gentile empire, however, is so powerful and brutal, it is described as a beast that crushes. The fourth Gentile empire began with the Roman empire. The Roman empire came to an end but the fourth Gentile empire has not. The Roman empire was a stage of the fourth Gentile empire but is not the totality of the fourth Gentile empire. The fourth Gentile empire and the Roman empire are not one in the same. The fourth Gentile empire which began with the Roman empire continues to dominate Jerusalem until the end of the Tribulation.

So what is this fourth Gentile empire that began with the Roman empire but extends beyond it?

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum offers this possible explanation:

When the Babylonians conquered an area, they did not set up Babylonian rulers, but set up nationals to rule. In its conquest of Judah, Babylon first set up Zedekiah, and later Gedaliah was appointed to rule. Under Medo-Persia the same thing was done, and Jewish governors such as Zerubbabel and Nehemiah ruled. The Hellenists worked in the same way. Instead of sending in Greeks to rule, they allowed the Jewish high priests to rule throughout the period of Greek domination.

But Rome began a new system called imperialism. This is what made the Fourth Empire diverse from all the others. When Rome conquered, Romans were sent in to rule (e.g., Pontius Pilate, Felix, Festus). This was the policy of imperialism.¹

Thus Dr. Fruchtenbaum refers to the fourth Gentile empire as the empire of *Imperialism*. The Roman empire was simply the first of five stages through which the fourth Gentile empire will progress. These five stages are revealed in Daniel chapters 2 & 7 and in Revelation chapters 13 & 17. Looking at the chart in our notes we can see that the five stages revealed are: 1) the united stage, 2) the divided stage, 3) the one world government stage, 4) the ten kingdom stage and 5) the Antichrist stage.

The fourth Gentile empire, *Imperialism*, has completed stage one and is presently in stage two – the two division stage. How do we know this?

In 285, the (Roman) emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305) partitioned the Roman Empire's administration into eastern and western halves. Between 324 and 330, Constantine I (r. 306–337) transferred the main capital from Rome to Byzantium, later known as *Constantinople*.²

Dr. Fruchtenbaum explains what took place after this.

The eastern division of power remained in Constantinople until 1453, when it collapsed in the Turkish invasion. When Constantinople fell, the political rulers, scribes, and scholars fled northward into Russia and infiltrated the government there, setting up a Roman type of government (imperialism). The rulers called themselves Czars, which is Russian for "Caesar." After a while, Russia gave herself the official title of the Third Roman Empire. Eventually, the eastern balance of power was centered in the Soviet Union and included the Communist block of nations. With the

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah : a Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*, Rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 33.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire

collapse of European communism, the eastern balance shifted to Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).³

The western division of power remained in Rome from 364 to 476, when Rome fell. From there it shifted to France, especially with the power gained by Charlemagne in A.D. 800. He called his domain the Holy Roman Empire of the Frankish Nation. In 962, Otto I of Germany defeated the Franks and set up the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The leaders named themselves Kaisers, which is German for "Caesar." Since then, especially after World War I, the western balance of power has been centered in the democratic nations of the west.

So then, in 364 the Two Division Stage began and continues to the present day.⁴

With this background we are better able to understand the symbols used to describe the Antichrist in Revelation 13. As we discovered previously, Revelation 13 reveals that during the second half of the 7-year Tribulation Satan will work through the Antichrist and the False Prophet to pursue his goals of destroying the Jews and receiving the worship of mankind.

Verses 1-10 focus on the Antichrist; verses 11-18 the False Prophet.

The highly symbolic description of the Antichrist found in verses 1 & 2 is taken from the Old Testament book of Daniel chapter 7. In Daniel 7 (also Daniel 2) God revealed that four Gentile empires would dominate Jerusalem over the course of the *Times of the Gentiles*. The Babylonian empire, represented as a lion, was the first Gentile empire to dominate Jerusalem beginning in 586 B.C. (Dan. 7:4). The Medo-Persian empire, represented as a bear, was the second (Dan. 7:5). The Grecian (Hellenistic) empire, represented as a leopard, was the third (Dan. 7:6). The Roman empire and its successive forms, represented as a powerful beast, is the fourth (Dan. 7:7-8).

Having this background from Daniel 7 we can interpret the symbols used to describe the Antichrist in Revelation 13:2

Revelation 13:2 (ESV)

² And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth.

Revelation 13:2 is revealing that the Antichrist's rise to world domination will have characteristics associated with the Hellenistic, Medo-Persian and Babylonian empires. The leopard symbolizes the speed by which the Greek army under Alexander conquered. The bear symbolizes the overwhelming power by which the Medo-Persian army conquered. The lion symbolizes the intimidation and strength by which the Babylonians conquered. Revelation 13:2 reveals that the Antichrist's rise to power in the second half of the Tribulation will be accomplished swiftly through overwhelming power using tactics of intimidation.

Whereas Revelation 13:2 describes *how the Antichrist will rise to power* midway through the Tribulation, Revelation 13:1 reveals *the kings whom the Antichrist will conquer* in his drive for world domination. These ten kings are symbolized by the ten horns.

Revelation 13:1 (ESV)

¹ And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

Turn once again to Daniel 7 and to verse 7. Remember, this vision is about the *Times of the Gentiles* and reveals the four Gentile empires that trample Jerusalem over the course of the *Times of the Gentiles*. Verses 4, 5, & 6 revealed the first three empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. Verses 7-8 reveal the fourth empire.

Daniel 7:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸ I considered the horns, and

³ Fruchtenbaum, pg 34.

⁴ Fruchtenbaum, pgs 34-35.

behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

These verses reveal that from the fourth Gentile empire of *Imperialism* ten horns (representing ten kings/kingdoms) will arise. Referencing your chart, this will be the fourth stage of the fourth Gentile empire The Ten Kingdom Stage. As you will see in a moment, Daniel 7:23 reveals that the fourth Gentile empire will devour the whole earth prior to the rise of the ten horns. Thus, Daniel 7:23 also reveals the third stage of the fourth Gentile empire, the One World Government Stage.

Ten horns will rise from within the fourth Gentile empire followed by an eleventh horn. The meaning of these horns is explained in Daniel 7:23-27 and in Revelation 17:12-14

Let's first study Daniel 7:23-27

Daniel 7:23–27 (ESV)

²³ “Thus he said: ‘As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces. ²⁴ As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. ²⁵ He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. ²⁶ But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. ²⁷ And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.’

Verse 24 reveals that the ten horns represent ten kings/kingdoms that will arise from the fourth Gentile empire. It is important to realize that these ten horns/kings are *contemporaries*; they rise to power at the same time after The One World Government Stage. It is these ten kings that the Antichrist is seeking to conquer from the beginning of the Tribulation (6:1-2). Antichrist is the eleventh horn, puts down three and becomes the eighth horn when the remaining seven subject themselves to his rule.

By conquering the ten horns Antichrist will achieve world domination and press his campaign against the Jews for the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation (vs 25 – “time, times and half a time”). The reign of Antichrist will end with the 2nd Coming of Messiah.

Revelation 17 gives us further insight into the ten horns. An angel is explaining to the Apostle John the meaning of the ten horns. Keep in mind this took place in 96 A.D.

Revelation 17:12–14 (ESV)

¹² And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

This passage reveals that the ten horns are ten kings whom Antichrist will conquer. The seven kings (Dan. 7:24) who survive the Antichrist's attacks will join him in his campaign against the Jews and against followers of Jesus. This coalition led by the Antichrist will be destroyed at the 2nd Coming of Jesus.

REFLECTION

In this study we are applying the principles of the previous: reading slowly, absorbing smaller pieces of information and reviewing. Hopefully we now understand what is being conveyed about the Antichrist through the symbols of the leopard, bear and lion. So also, we understand the symbolism of the ten horns.

In this study we discovered that the first two stages of the fourth Gentile empire have been fulfilled in human history. The United Stage of the Roman empire and The Two Division Stage of the east-west balance of power are realities even secular historians acknowledge. I trust you realize or are growing to

realize that the Bible is an extraordinary book that cannot be just the handiwork of man. The Bible is dually authored by the Holy Spirit of God and the human authors of each book. It is God's Word to you and me. You can trust it with your life.