

# WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST?

MARK HITCHCOCK



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

EUGENE, OREGON

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Published in association with William K. Jensen Literary Agency, 119 Bampton Court, Eugene, Oregon 97404

## **WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST?**

Copyright © 2011 by Mark Hitchcock  
Published by Harvest House Publishers  
Eugene, Oregon 97402  
www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hitchcock, Mark.

Who is the Antichrist? / Mark Hitchcock.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-7369-3995-9 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-4204-1 (eBook)

1. Antichrist. I. Title.

BT985.H59 2011

236—dc22

2010046907

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**Printed in the United States of America**

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 / LB-NI / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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*To Jay Risner,  
a faithful friend and colaborer for Christ.  
Thanks for your godly example and influence  
on my sons and for your heart for  
our Lord and His church.*

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# Who Is the Antichrist?

## Answering the Question Everyone Is Asking

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| <b>PART 1: The Curiosity About the Antichrist</b> . . . . .   | 9      |
| Why is there so much interest in and speculation about<br>the Antichrist today? . . . . .                               | 9      |
| Why should I be concerned about the Antichrist? . . . . .   | 17     |
| Where does the Bible tell about the Antichrist? . . . . .   | 20     |
| What did the early church believe about him? . . . . .  | 25     |
| Will believers know who the Antichrist is before the rapture?<br>Should we to try to figure out his identity? . . . . . | 32     |
| <br><b>PART 2: The Character of the Antichrist</b> . . . . .  | <br>41 |
| What does the word <i>Antichrist</i> mean? . . . . .  | 41     |
| Will the Antichrist be an actual, individual person? . . . . .  | 46     |
| What is the “spirit” of Antichrist? . . . . .   | 49     |
| What will he be like? . . . . .   | 51     |
| Will he be a Jew or a Gentile? . . . . .  | 57     |
| Will he be Satan incarnate? . . . . .   | 60     |
| Will he be an individual resurrected from the past? . . . . .   | 62     |
| What other names and titles will he have? . . . . .   | 65     |
| Will he be a homosexual? . . . . .  | 70     |
| What is the nationality of the Antichrist? . . . . .  | 72     |
| Will he be a Muslim, possibly even the Islamic Mahdi? . . . . .   | 77     |
| Could an American president be the Antichrist? . . . . .  | 82     |
| Is the Antichrist the same person as “Gog” in Ezekiel 38? . . . . .   | 83     |
| Is the mark of the beast (666) past or future? . . . . .  | 88     |
| What is the mark of the beast? . . . . .  | 92     |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| What's the significance of the number 666? . . . . .   | 95         |
| Why 666? . . . . .   | 98         |
| What's the purpose of the mark? . . . . .  | 99         |
| Does modern technology have anything to do with<br>the mark of the beast? . . . . .          | 101        |
| How will the Antichrist persuade people to<br>take the mark? . . . . .                       | 103        |
| <b>PART 3: The Coming of the Antichrist . . . . .</b>  | <b>107</b> |
| How will the Antichrist rise to world power? . . . . .                                       | 107        |
| What are some of the signs of his coming? . . . . .  | 112        |
| <b>PART 4: The Career of the Antichrist . . . . .</b>  | <b>125</b> |
| What will the Antichrist do during his career? . . . . .                                     | 125        |
| How long will he rule the world? . . . . .   | 128        |
| What is the Antichrist's relationship to Babylon? . . . . .                                  | 128        |
| Will he be assassinated and come back to life? . . . . .                                     | 135        |
| Who is the false prophet, and what is his relationship<br>to the Antichrist? . . . . .       | 144        |
| What is the "abomination of desolation" that the<br>Antichrist will introduce? . . . . .     | 152        |
| Why will the Antichrist persecute the Jewish people? . . . . .                               | 157        |
| How will he relate to the two witnesses? . . . . .   | 165        |
| Are there any historical figures or "types" who foreshadow<br>Antichrist's career? . . . . . | 171        |
| Will the Antichrist be under God's control? . . . . .  | 173        |
| <b>PART 5: The Consummation of the Antichrist . . . . .</b>                                  | <b>177</b> |
| Antichrist and Armageddon: What will happen? . . . . .                                       | 177        |
| Is the Antichrist alive today? . . . . .   | 179        |
| How does this apply to your life today? . . . . .  | 183        |
| Notes . . . . .  | 187        |

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*“When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness,  
he offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world  
if He would bow down and worship him.  
Of course, Jesus refused his offer. But in the future  
there is coming a man who will take Satan up on  
the offer, and whom Satan will indwell,  
giving his power, throne, and all his authority  
into the hands of this one man.”*

DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE

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## PART I

# The Curiosity About the Antichrist



*“Many people believe the great millennial end-game has already begun. As civilization speeds toward its final destiny, the appearance of a powerful world ruler is inevitable. The ultimate question facing our generation is whether he is already alive and well and moving into power.”*

ED HINDSON, *IS THE ANTICHRIST ALIVE AND WELL?*

## Why is there so much interest in and speculation about the Antichrist today?

I heard a story a while back about two Jehovah’s Witnesses who were going door-to-door and hoping for the opportunity to talk to people about their views. They came to the door of a man who invited them in and asked them to take a seat in the living room while he took care of something in the back room. After a few minutes the man returned to the living room and said, “Now what was it you wanted to talk to me about?” Surprised, the two Jehovah’s Witnesses looked at each other. Then one of them said, “We don’t know. We’ve never been this far before.”

That's an accurate illustration of where people find themselves today with regard to the future: We've never been this far before. In Romans 13:11-12 we read, "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near."

It is becoming increasingly clear to many that this world is drawing nearer to "closing time," and people are asking questions about the future like never before. Many are fearful, anxious, and uncertain. There's a growing fascination with what might happen next. People are more and more focused on what tomorrow might hold. Economic meltdowns, the menace of pandemic plagues, cataclysmic natural disasters, and the dreaded threat of nuclear terror are all converging to make the world a more dangerous place than at any other time in human history.

At the same time, there's growing talk among world leaders about efforts toward global unity. For example, there have been high-profile economic and climate conferences at which government representatives have tried to get multiple countries to work together toward certain goals. And there are other ways that various governments have called for global cooperation with regard to specific problems and issues. More and more we are seeing efforts toward a centralization of power that is leading many to wonder if the time of the Antichrist is here—if the final world ruler and his one-world government is about to make his debut on the world stage. The world is longing for someone who can bring hope and provide answers for the world's mounting crises. Could the Antichrist's arrival be soon—very soon? Could he be alive now and present somewhere on earth, waiting in the wings for his time to come?

People are talking about the Antichrist more and more these

days. In some ways this is not surprising because people have always had a fascination with the human personification of evil, and they've had a heyday trying to figure out who the Antichrist is. The identity of the Antichrist has intrigued people for 2000 years, and many have found the temptation to identify him irresistible. Through the centuries, they've suggested numerous possibilities, and one consistent candidate has been the various popes. Martin Luther, the great reformer, is reported to have said, "I feel much freer now that I am certain the pope is the Antichrist."

Among the more prominent candidates that have been suggested are Emperor Frederick II, Pope Innocent IV, Muhammad, the Turks, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin. In more recent times there's been no shortage of names:

*President John F. Kennedy*—He was a Catholic who was assassinated by a head wound. Some people associated this with the mortal wound the Antichrist will one day receive (see Revelation 13:3) and expected Kennedy to come back to life.

*Henry Kissinger*—He is a Jewish person whose name, according to some calculations, equals 666. A key reason some people suggested he might be the Antichrist was his former renown as a great diplomat and peacemaker.

*Mikhail Gorbachev*—Who could ignore that great red mark on his forehead? Some people assumed it just had to be related to the mark of the beast.

*President Ronald Reagan*—His name, Ronald Wilson Reagan, was comprised of three words with six letters each, which some people equated with the number 666. They also thought his recovery from a gunshot wound might have some significance.

*Bill Clinton*—Many people pointed to Bill Clinton as possibly being the Antichrist, and some of them viewed Hillary as the false prophet (a companion of the Antichrist who, according to

the book of Revelation, will promote Antichrist's power and persuade people to worship him).

Some people have jokingly referred to this ongoing effort to identify the Antichrist as “pin the tail on the Antichrist.” It's worth observing that those who engage in this exercise generally pin the Antichrist moniker on whomever they happen to particularly dislike. Almost every president since Ronald Reagan has been identified as the Antichrist by someone. So it's not too surprising that after Barack Obama became president, some began to suggest he is the Antichrist. There are cable news programs that have run interviews and stories about this claim, and polls show that this isn't merely some lunatic fringe belief. According to a Louis Harris poll taken on March 23, 2010,

- 67 percent of Republicans (and 40 percent of Americans overall) believe that Obama is a socialist
- 45 percent of Republicans (and 25 percent overall) believe that Obama was “not born in the United States and so is not eligible to be president”
- 38 percent of Republicans (and 20 percent overall) say that Obama is “doing many of the things that Hitler did”

But the most intriguing finding of all is that 24 percent of Republicans (and 14 percent of Americans overall) say that Obama “may be the Antichrist.” Those who hold this view have been dubbed “Antichrists,” just as those who have questioned President Obama's citizenship are called “birthers.”<sup>1</sup>

The specter of Obama as the Antichrist has circulated widely on the Internet. There's a video that's acquired quite a following that maintains Jesus gave us the name of the Antichrist and links Barack Obama to the name, although a disclaimer is given that the narrator is not claiming that President Obama is the

Antichrist. The video is based on Luke 10:18, where Jesus said, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” The argument then progresses like this:

1. Jesus spoke in Aramaic, not Greek.
2. Jesus said, “I saw Satan falling as lightning from the heights, or from the heavens.”
3. The passage is then retranslated as “I saw Satan falling as lightning from the heavens.”
4. It’s noted that in biblical Hebrew, the word translated “lightning” is *baraq*.
5. This is related to Isaiah 14, which speaks of Satan or Lucifer.
6. The Hebrew translated “heights” in Isaiah 14:14 is *bamaw*.<sup>2</sup>

Well, you can see where this is headed. Is there any validity to that line of thinking? The best analysis of this reasoning has been done by New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace. After addressing each of the above points and several more, Wallace reached this conclusion:

When all is said and done, the evidence is simply bogus. Jesus didn’t speak in Hebrew, and the Hebrew that is given here does not mean “lightning from the heights.” *Baraq ubamah* means “lightning and height.” But that can hardly be the underlying Aramaic (which is not Hebrew) for the Greek text of Luke 10:18. Thus, a linguistic leap from Greek to Aramaic to Hebrew, with the grammar and vocabulary changing along the way, is required to make Luke 10:18 mean what the narrator wants it to mean.<sup>3</sup>

Much was said in some circles about the claim that the winning lottery number in the Pick 3 lottery in the President's home state (Illinois) on November 5, 2008, the day after his presidential election victory, was 6-6-6. Others have said that his zip code is 60606. One blogger noted, "Why are there so many coincidences with Obama and 666?" and then went on to list the alleged "coincidences."

Birth date: August 4 (216th day of the year)

$216 = 6 \times 6 \times 6$

Birthplace: Longitude 21.6 (again the number 216)

$216 (21.6) = 6 \times 6 \times 6$

Name: 18 letters

$18 = 6 + 6 + 6$

The winning lottery ticket number in Chicago, Obama's home governing state the day after he was elected was...

6-6-6

The next pick was...

7-7-7-9

According to God's numerology...

666 = Antichrist

777 = Perfect completion

9 = Judgment

$6667779 = \text{"Antichrist perfect completion judgment (time?)"}$ <sup>4</sup>

I have no idea whether all those allegations are true, but it shows the extent to which some people are obsessed with trying to figure out the identity of the Antichrist. Not long after all the furor about Obama was hitting the mainstream, an extremist group called the Hutaree militia got a lot of attention in the news because they had plotted to murder a police officer and then kill the mourners at

his funeral with the help of homemade bombs. All this was part of a grand plan to prepare for battle with the Antichrist. A key part of the theology concocted by this group was a belief that former NATO secretary-general Javier Solana is the Antichrist.<sup>5</sup>

Another reason for the high level of interest people have in the Antichrist stems from the presence of an Antichrist figure in many world religions. You might be surprised, as I was, to learn that the three great world religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) teach about a powerful and sinister world ruler who will emerge during the end times. They are all looking for a man of unparalleled evil, an ultimate enemy who will come during the last days and take over the world.

In Islam, this person is called *Al-Dajjal*, which in Arabic means “deceiver.” His full title is *Al-Maseeh* (the Messiah) *Ad-Dajjal*, (the Liar/Deceiver). Here are some of his main characteristics, according to Islamic teaching:

- He will be a young man.
- He will appear during a time of great tribulation.
- He will be blind in one eye (there are conflicting sources about which eye), and this eye will be covered by a thick film while the other eye will bulge out and protrude like a floating grape.
- He will have thick hair.
- He will have the word *Infidel* (*Kaafir*) written in between his eyes, or possibly on his forehead, but only true Muslims will perceive its meaning.
- The Dajjal will possess incredible supernatural powers that he will use to deceive Muslims. According to one source, “The Dajjal will have powers of the devil. He will terrorize the Muslims into following him, converting

them into unbelief. He will conceal the truth and bring forth falsehood. The prophet said that the Dajjal will have the power to show the image of one's dead ancestors on his hand, like a television screen. The relative will say, 'Oh my son! This man is correct. I am in Paradise because I was good and I believed in him.' In reality that relative is in hell. If the relative says, 'Believe in this man; I am in hell because I didn't believe,' one must say to the Dajjal, 'No, he is in Paradise. This is false.'"<sup>6</sup>

- He will be the incarnation of evil.
- He will claim to be God.
- He will be a Jew who will gather 70,000 Jewish followers, along with other nonbelievers and hypocrites.
- He will go on a whirlwind tour of deception and destruction.
- He will set himself up as ruler in Jerusalem.
- He will finally be slain by Jesus at the Lydda Gate when the latter returns from heaven.
- The Dajjal's emergence on the world scene is one of Islam's ten key signs of the end times.

Judaism also has an Antichrist figure. Judaism teaches that a Roman ruler named Armilus will be a miracle worker who will lead his armies against Jerusalem. In the end, Armilus will be killed by Messiah ben David or Messiah the Son of David, the true Messiah.

In Christianity, as we have already seen, this final world ruler is known as the Antichrist, the beast, and the man of sin, as well as several other names and titles.

When we consider that three of the world's great religions are



looking for the rise of a great political-religious leader in the end times, it's no surprise today that speculation about the Antichrist's identity is on the rise. In fact, there is rapidly growing speculation that he may already be here. And people want to know who he is. I believe that as the world's problems continue to worsen, the curiosity will become all the more intense. With all that's transpiring in our world today, people are asking questions about the end times and the Antichrist like never before. Questions like:

- Are events in our world today setting the stage for the Antichrist's appearance?
- Who is this satanic superman who is yet to burst on the world scene?
- Where will he come from?
- What will he be like, and what will he do?
- Will he appear during our lifetime?

These are the kinds of questions I hope to answer throughout this book as we endeavor to answer the big question that stands as the title for this book: Who is the Antichrist?

## **Why should I be concerned about the Antichrist?**

When it comes to thinking about the Antichrist, some people today may feel like Denis the Carthusian, who said, "Have we not worn ourselves out with that accursed Antichrist?"<sup>7</sup> Yet I believe there are at least four reasons we should take the time to inform ourselves about the coming Antichrist.

First, the Bible has a great deal to tell us about this final world ruler. Other than Jesus Christ, the main person in all of Bible prophecy and all of human history is the coming world ruler or