

THE ULTIMATE WORSHIP OF MAN
Matthew 24:15

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Did you know that the Bible predicts that seven years before the second advent of Christ, a world dictator will come to power? He will have absolute authority and power over people. Satan, as well as God, has a program for this world. The ultimate fulfillment of Satan's devious plan will be his masterpiece, the coming world dictator. Bible scholars usually refer to this dictator as Anti-Christ, and the Bible refers to him as the man of sin, willful king, the lawless one, the little horn, the beast and the abomination of desolation. **NOTE:** According to the Bible, this world dictator will set up a political and religious system in this world that will be characterized by lawlessness, godlessness and absolute authoritarianism. The reign of the Anti-Christ will make the regimes of Hitler, Mao, and Stalin look like Girl Scouts weaving a daisy chain by comparison. The Antichrist is going to be given absolute authority to act with the power of Satan.
- B. Matthew 24:15-24 gives us one aspect of the terrible reign of this world dictator. The disciples asked our Lord, "What shall be the sign of the end of the age?" The Lord then gave some characteristics of the present age and in 24:14 says, "And then shall the end come." The sign of the end of the age is when the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet shall stand in the holy place (temple). The abomination of desolation is the world dictator himself.
- C. All of Matthew 24:15-24 is dealing with God's plan for Israel and the Jew for the Lord speaks of the temple (holy place) (24:15), Judea (24:16), and Sabbath day (24:19). Christ also mentions a period of "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (24:21). This Tribulation period is yet future in God's program and it will be a time of unprecedented suffering, distress, peril and tragedy. **NOTE:** Therefore we can conclude that the Tribulation period and the future Anti-Christ are contemporary. When the Antichrist is revealed the seven year tribulation will begin.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION - Daniel 9:24-27

- A. This is the main reference in Daniel to the abomination of desolation, and is called the prophecy of the vision of the seventy weeks (weeks of years). This announcement to Daniel was by the angel Gabriel telling him that God had marked off a period of 490 years (seventy weeks of years), which would begin

- when the Persian king, Artaxerxes, issued a commandment to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (fulfilled in 445 B.C.).
- B. The angel said that the first seven, and then the sixty-two of those weeks (69 weeks or 483 years) would end just before the Messiah would be cut off, which refers to his death on the Cross.
 - C. The prophecy goes on to say that (“the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.”) This was historically fulfilled when Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. **NOTE:** The period between the Messiah is cut off until the actually beginning of the 70th week is undetermined, although we know that it has gone on for at least 1971 years.
 - D. The prophecy then says “he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” The “he” refers to the prince who shall come and refers to the Antichrist or world dictator of the revived Roman Empire. He shall make a covenant with Israel for one week (7 years). **NOTE:** This 70th week of seven years is the Tribulation period and is yet to be fulfilled.
 - E. This world dictator makes a covenant with Israel to give her protection. Israel during this time will prosper in her land, and will rebuild her temple, re-establishing the sacrificial system. But in the middle of the week, after 3-½ years, the Antichrist will break the covenant with Israel, stop all sacrificing and set himself up in the temple as god. This will be the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel. **NOTE:** This Antichrist setting himself up as God will be the sign of the end of the age.
 - F. **POINT:** During the first 3-½ years of the Tribulation a temporary temple will be rebuilt. This means that the Jews will have to possess the temple area. **NOTE:** In view of that expectation perhaps the most important event since the first century was the capture of Old Jerusalem by the Jews in the Six Day War of 1967. For the first time in 1897 years (since 70 A.D.) Jews were once again in possession of the temple site. The Jews could begin to rebuild the temple site tomorrow if the Anti-Christ should appear on the scene to make a covenant. **NOTE:** The one problem is a Moslem mosque called The Dome of the Rock sits right on the temple sight, and to tear down this mosque would bring tremendous political and religious repercussions from the Arabs. But rebuild the temple they shall! You may rest assured that Israel may give up much of the land captured in the Six Day War for promises of peace for Israel. But they say they shall never part with Old Jerusalem and the temple sight.

ILLUSTRATION: After the third day of fighting in the Six Day War, Moshe Dayan, the ingenious Israeli general, marched to wailing wall, the last remnant of the Old Temple, and said, “We have returned to our holiest of holy places, never to leave her again.”

ILLUSTRATION: In a Time Magazine article of June 30, 1967, Israeli historian Israel Eldad was quoted as saying, “We are at the stage where David was when he liberated Jerusalem. From that time until the construction of the temple by Solomon, only one generation passed. So will it be with us.” When asked what would become of the Moslem shrine which is now located on the old temple site, Eldad answered, “It is of course an open question. Who knows? Perhaps there will be an earthquake.”

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

- A. **Introduction:** The Antichrist will claim to be God and will be worshipped by all men, except by true believers in Jesus Christ.
- B. **Daniel 11:36-38:** Most prophetic scholars agree that the willful king is a reference to the future dictator. These verses tell us that he has no respect for God and that his god is the god of force. However, he thinks himself to be God and speaks against the true God of Scripture.
- C. **II Thess. 2:1-4:** The Apostle Paul tells us that the Tribulation period cannot begin until the man of sin shows up in the world. He is called the “man of sin” because of his lawlessness. He is the “son of perdition” because he is motivated completely by Satanic power. He will do great miracles by Satan’s power and the world will worship him as he sits in the temple claiming to be God.
- D. **Rev. 13:1-8:** The Apostle John saw a Beast rise up out of the sea. He is called a beast because from God’s standpoint that is what he is. “The sea” in the Book of Revelation is the picture of Gentile nations. This Beast rises to power out of the Gentile nations. The Beast had ten horns and this refers to the ten countries that will make up the future revived Roman empire. The Beast receives his power from the dragon, and the dragon according to Revelation 12 is Satan himself. The Beast is worshipped by the world and he makes war against the saints. He speaks blasphemies against God with his big mouth. His power extends over “all kindred’s, and tongues, and nations.” All but the true believers in Christ during the tribulation period follow the Beast and worship him.

IV. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

(II Thess. 2:8): The defeat of the world dictator and the end of the worship of a man will come when Christ returns in His second advent to judge man and to establish His own kingdom for a thousand years over this earth.

- V. **THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST:** A dictator always rises to power because of chaos in society. It is one who seizes authority as the result of emergency.

- A. A Collapsing Society: The world dictator will arise out of a troubled world society. We presently live in a world that is 1) threatened by overpopulation; 2) there is constant threat of extinction through atomic war; 3) there is a breakdown of absolutes in morality; 4) there is lawlessness on every hand; 5) and there is great corruption in politics, economics and religion. **NOTE** This world dictator will have a magnetic personality, be personally attractive and a powerful speaker. He will be able to mesmerize an audience with his oratory. He will promise peace and security to the whole world, and he will rise to power on a “law and order campaign.

ILLUSTRATION: Belgium’s premier P.H. Spock said in the newspaper LaSeur:

The truth is that the method on international committees has failed. What we need is a person someone of the highest order or great experience, of great authority, of wide influence of great energy. Let him come and let him come quickly. Either a civilian or a military man, no matter what his nationality, who will cut all the red tape, shove out of the way all the committees, take up all the people and galvanize all governments into action. Let him come quickly. This man we need and for who we wait will take charge of the defense of the West. Once more I say, it is not too late, but it is high time.

- B. A Conditioned Mind: The world will believe that Antichrist is actually God. When the abomination of desolation sits in the temple it will be because, throughout the world, humanity has already enthroned itself as the only god man needs. This ultimate deification of man will happen almost immediately but this was a result of years of mental conditioning for this event. The abomination of desolation is merely representative of man’s philosophy that he is god. This philosophy can be seen today in humanism and an abuse of the scientific method which will lead man to be deluded in his thinking to accept that he is his own god, and does not need any other. The Apostle Paul said in II Thess. 2:7, “the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.” And the Apostle John said in II John 1:7, “many antichrists have already come.” **NOTE**: In our own day the lie of humanism grows gradually more powerful and persuasive. You can hear in on every side, in a thousand and one subtle variations. Humanism is an empty dream; the web of illusion that man can be his own god; the lie that man can live a full and complete life without recognition of the authority and Lordship of Jesus Christ. **NOTE**: Humanism says that man makes all the rules and can handle all the problems of life himself. Man exists for his own glory; down with anyone who thinks otherwise. Humanism is dominant equally in the communist world as well as the western world. Soon this widespread philosophy will demand a figure, a leader, in whom all the excellencies that man sees in himself are personified. It will find it’s ultimate expression in a man who shall appear to satisfy the hunger for hero worship in the world. This man shall be Antichrist.

ILLUSTRATION: Arnold Toynbee, one of the foremost historians of our time said:

By forcing on mankind more and more lethal weapons, and at the same time making the world more interdependent economically, technology has brought mankind to such a degree of distress that we are ripe for the deifying of any new Caesar who might succeed in giving the world unity and peace.

ILLUSTRATION: The world is being subtly prepared for the Antichrist. For instance, there are communes of hippies in California who are looking for the arrival of the “Aquarian Age” in 2000 to be ushered in by a new messiah to be born in 1980.

ILLUSTRATION: Jean Dixon by no means a Christian, through her clairvoyant ways, is being used by Satan to condition a world for the coming of Antichrist. She says,

A child born somewhere in the Middle East shortly after 7:00 A.M. on February 5, 1962, will revolutionize the world. Before the close of the century he will bring together all mankind in one all embracing faith. This will be the foundation of a new Christianity, with every sect and creed united through this man, who will walk among the people to spread the wisdom of the almighty power. Mankind will begin to feel the great force of this man in the early 1980’s, and during the subsequent years the world as we know it will be reshaped and revamped into one without wars of suffering. His power will grow greatly until 1999, at which time the people of this earth will probably discover the full meaning of the vision.

VI. **CONCLUSION**

- A. I want to warn you here this morning who are not Christians that you in one form or another are following the spirit of Antichrist which is humanism. Humanism teaches the terrible lie that man can live independently of God, but the end result of this philosophy is emptiness, futility and despair. Only God through Christ can fill the vacuum in a man’s heart and give the real meaning to life.
- B. Are you thirsting to have spiritual answers? Do you have a deep thirst in your heart for reality? Jesus said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” Only Christ can quench one’s burning spiritual thirst. The scriptures say:

“And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17)