

6 characteristics of Antichrist & antichrists

j	1 st characteristic of Antichrist – 1 Jn 2.19	separate (1 Cor 11); in the prior passages, John has exalted love of brethren vs love of the world. The antichrists go out into the world, even willing to separate from the Apostles and their churches. Cults specialize in not only separating from believing communities, but slandering the same. Who is the father of slanderers, the “accuser of the brethren”? (Rev 12:9,10) Paul marks dissension, division among the works of the flesh (Gal 5:18-21).
j	2 nd — 2.20	special gnosis “anointing” , knowledge or “new light” even beyond the Apostles. This “anointing” effectively creates a new priesthood, rather than affirming the priesthood of ALL believers (Rev 5:9,10).
j	3 rd — 2.22	denies Jesus is the Christ Many of the false teachers of post-apostolic times either denied Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, or drove a wedge between the human Jesus and the “Christ”. Gnosticism specialized in this dividing of Jesus from “the Christ”
j	4 th — 2.24; 2 John 9	discontinuity with apostolic tradition fail to abide in teaching of Apostles (unchanging); antichrists ‘go on ahead’. Paul saw continuity, not apostasy, in tradition: “stand firm and hold fast to the traditions you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter” (2 Thess 2:15, ESV). This admonition comes immediately after Paul’s warning about the great apostasy, the “man of lawlessness” and the “strong delusion” which will deceive those who do not believe.
j	5 th — 2.25	eternal life denied or distorted. False teachers cannot abide the plain declaration that eternal life is the free gift of God, and is the present possession of believers (John 5:24,25; John 10:27-30)
j	6 th — 4.2; 2 John 7	denies Jesus Christ has come in the flesh This denial had 3 aspects: 1/ denying the incarnation, the full humanity of Jesus; 2/ denying the bodily resurrection and ascension, i.e. that Christ retained His humanity even after the incarnation; 3/ denying the literal return of the ‘Son of man’, the glorified Jesus.
		Our video on this passage https://youtu.be/j-D5YAND1hQ

Justin Martyr (ca 110-165) *Dialogue with Trypho CX*

O unreasoning men! understanding not what has been proved by all these passages, that two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians, who, having learned the true worship of God from the law, and the word which went forth from Jerusalem by means of the apostles of Jesus, have fled for safety to the God of Jacob and God of Israel.

Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* III 6.5)

And the Apostle Paul also, saying, "For though ye have served them which are no gods; ye now know God, or rather, are known of God," has made a separation between those that were not [gods] and Him who is God. And again, speaking of Antichrist, he says, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." He points out here those who are called gods, by such as know not God, that is, idols.

(*Against Heresies* III 7.2) And again, in the Second to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he says, "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus Christ shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the presence of his coming; [even him] whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." Now in these [sentences] the order of the words is this: "And then shall be revealed that wicked, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the presence of His coming." For he does not mean that the coming of the Lord is after the working of Satan; but the coming of the wicked one, whom we also call Antichrist. If, then, one does not attend to the [proper] reading [of the passage], and if he do not exhibit the intervals of breathing as they occur, there shall be not only incongruities, but also, when reading, he will utter blasphemy, as if the advent of the Lord could take place according to the working of Satan.

(*Against Heresies* III 16.5) The Gospel, therefore, knew no other son of man but Him who was of Mary, who also suffered; and no Christ who flew away from Jesus before the passion; but Him who was born it knew as Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that this same suffered and rose again, as John, the disciple of the Lord, verities, saying: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have eternal life in His name," -foreseeing these blasphemous systems which divide the Lord, as far as lies in their power, saying that He was formed of two different substances. For this reason also he has thus testified to us in his Epistle: "Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist doth come, now have many antichrists appeared; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but [they departed], that they might be made manifest that they are not of us. Know ye therefore, that every lie is from without, and is not of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist."

(*Against Heresies* III 16.8) All, therefore, are outside of the [Christian] dispensation, who, under pretext of knowledge, understand that Jesus was one, and Christ another, and the Only-begotten another, from whom again is the Word, and that the Saviour is another, whom these disciples of error allege to be a production of those who were made Aeons in a state of degeneracy. Such men are to outward appearance sheep; for they appear to be like us, by what they say in public, repeating the same words as we do; but inwardly they are wolves. Their doctrine is homicidal, conjuring up, as it does, a number of gods, and simulating many Fathers, but lowering and dividing the Son of God in many ways. These are they against whom the Lord has cautioned us beforehand; and His disciple, in his Epistle already mentioned, commands us to avoid them, when he says: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Take heed to them, that ye lose not what ye have wrought." And again does he say in the Epistle: "Many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which separates Jesus Christ is not of God, but is of antichrist." These words agree with what was said in the Gospel, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Wherefore he again exclaims in his Epistle, "Every one that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, has

been born of God; " knowing Jesus Christ to be one and the same, to whom the gates of heaven were opened, because of His taking upon Him flesh: who shall also come in the same flesh in which He suffered, revealing the glory of the Father.

(*Against Heresies* IV 29.1) ... but to those who believe in Him and follow Him, He grants a fuller and greater illumination of mind. In accordance with this word, therefore, does the apostle say, in the Second [to] the Corinthians: "In whom the this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine [unto them]." And again, in that to the Romans: "And as they did not think fit to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient." Speaking of antichrist, too, he says clearly in the Second to the Thessalonians: "And for this cause God shall send them the working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but consented to iniquity."

Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V 25.1) *The Fraud, Pride, and Tyrannical Kingdom of Antichrist, as Described by Daniel and Paul.*

1. And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God; and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king. For he (Antichrist) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e., one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: "Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God." The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped-that is, above every idol-for these are indeed so called by men, but are not [really] gods; and that he will endeavour in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.

2. Moreover, he (the apostle) has also pointed out this which I have shown in many ways, that the temple in Jerusalem was made by the direction of the true God. For the apostle himself, speaking in his own person, distinctly called it the temple of God. Now I have shown in the third book, that no one is termed God by the apostles when speaking for themselves, except Him who truly is God, the Father of our Lord, by whose directions the temple which is at Jerusalem was constructed for those purposes which I have already mentioned; in which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: for there shall then be great hardship, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be."

3. Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face. He says: "And, behold, eyes were in this horn as the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and his

look was more stout than his fellows. I was looking, and this horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came and gave judgment to the saints of the most high God, and the time came, and the saints obtained the kingdom." Then, further on, in the interpretation of the vision, there was said to him: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall excel all other kingdoms, and devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and cut it in pieces. And its ten horns are ten kings which shall arise; and after them shall arise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all that were before him, and shall overthrow three kings; and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time," that is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth. Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second [Epistle] to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus says: "And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the presence of His coming; whose coming [i.e., the wicked one's] is after the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and portents of lies, and with all deceivableness of wickedness for those who perish; because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And therefore God will send them the working of error, that they may believe a lie; that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but gave consent to iniquity,"

4. The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him: "I have come in my Father's name, and ye have not received Me: when another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," calling Antichrist "the other," because he is alienated from the Lord. This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one "who feared not God, neither regarded man," to whom the widow fled in her forgetfulness of God,-that is, the earthly Jerusalem,-to be avenged of her adversary. Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom: he shall remove his kingdom into that [city], and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ. To this purpose Daniel says again: "And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin has been given for a sacrifice, and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active (fecit), and gone on prosperously." And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision, states with regard to this person: "And towards the end of their kingdom a king of a most fierce countenance shall arise, one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonders; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence (faciet), and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand, and he shall be lifted up in his heart: he shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs." And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: "And in the midst of the week," he says, "the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete." Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.

5. From all these passages are revealed to us, not merely the particulars of the apostasy, and [the doings] of him who concentrates in himself every satanic error, but also, that there is one and the same God the Father, who was declared by the prophets, but made manifest by Christ. For if what Daniel prophesied concerning the end has been confirmed by the Lord, when He said, "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (and the angel Gabriel gave the interpretation of the visions to Daniel, and he is the archangel of the Creator (Demiurgi), who also proclaimed to Mary the visible coining and the incarnation of Christ), then one and the same God is most manifestly pointed out, who sent the prophets, and made promise of the Son, and called us into His knowledge.

Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V 26.1) *John and Daniel Have Predicted the Dissolution and Desolation of the Roman Empire, Which Shall Precede the End of the World and the Eternal Kingdom of Christ. The Gnostics are Refuted, Those Tools of Satan, Who Invent Another Father Different from the Creator.*

1. In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules [the earth] shall be partitioned. He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel, telling us that thus it had been said to him: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings." It is manifest, therefore, that of these [potentates], he who is to come shall slay three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them. And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord. For that the kingdom must be divided, and thus come to ruin, the Lord [declares when He] says: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." It must be, therefore, that the kingdom, the city, and the house be divided into ten; and for this reason He has already foreshadowed the partition and division [which shall take place]. Daniel also says particularly, that the end of the fourth kingdom consists in the toes of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, upon which came the stone cut out without hands; and as he does himself say: "The feet were indeed the one part iron, the other part clay, until the stone was cut out without hands, and struck the image upon the iron and clay feet, and dashed them into pieces, even to the end." Then afterwards, when interpreting this, he says: "And as thou sawest the feet and the toes, partly indeed of clay, and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, and there shall be in it a root of iron, as thou sawest iron mixed with baked clay. And the toes were indeed the one part iron, but the other part clay." The ten toes, therefore, are these ten kings, among whom the kingdom shall be partitioned, of whom some indeed shall be strong and active, or energetic; others, again, shall be sluggish and useless, and shall not agree; as also Daniel says: "Some part of the kingdom shall be strong, and part shall be broken from it. As thou sawest the iron mixed with the baked clay, there shall be minglings among the human race, but no cohesion one with the other, just as iron cannot be welded on to pottery ware." And since an end shall take place, he says: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven raise up a kingdom which shall never decay, and His kingdom shall not be left to another people. It shall break in pieces and shatter all kingdoms, and shall itself be exalted for ever. As thou sawest that the stone was cut without hands from the mountain, and brake in pieces the baked clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold, God has pointed out to the king what shall come to pass after these things; and the dream is true, and the interpretation trustworthy."

2. If therefore the great God showed future things by Daniel, and confirmed them by His Son; and if Christ is the stone which is cut out without hands, who shall destroy temporal kingdoms, and introduce an eternal one, which is the resurrection of the just; as he declares, "The God of heaven shall raise up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed,"-let those thus confuted come to their senses, who reject the Creator (Demiurgum), and do not agree that the prophets were sent beforehand from the same Father from whom also the Lord came, but who assert that prophecies originated from diverse powers. For those things which have been predicted by the Creator alike through all the prophets has Christ fulfilled in the end, ministering to His Father's will, and completing His dispensations with regard to the human race. Let those persons, therefore, who blaspheme the Creator, either by openly expressed words, such as the disciples of Marcion, or by a perversion of the sense [of Scripture], as those of Valentinus and all the Gnostics falsely so called,

be recognised as agents of Satan by all those who worship God; through whose agency Satan now, and not before, has been seen to speak against God, even Him who has prepared eternal fire for every kind of apostasy. For he did not venture to blaspheme his Lord openly of himself; as also in the beginning he led man astray through the instrumentality of the serpent, concealing himself as it were from God. Truly has Justin remarked: That before the Lord's appearance Satan never dared to blaspheme God, inasmuch as he did not yet know his own sentence, because it was contained in parables and allegories; but that after the Lord's appearance, when he had clearly ascertained from the words of Christ and His apostles that eternal fire has been prepared for him as he apostatized from God of his own free-will, and likewise for all who unrepentant continue in the apostasy, he now blasphemes, by means of such men, the Lord who brings judgment [upon him] as being already condemned, and imputes the guilt of his apostasy to his Maker, not to his own voluntary disposition. Just as it is with those who break the laws, when punishment overtakes them: they throw the blame upon those who frame the laws, but not upon themselves. In like manner do those men, filled with a satanic spirit, bring innumerable accusations against our Creator, who has both given to us the spirit of life, and established a law adapted for all; and they will not admit that the judgment of God is just. Wherefore also they set about imagining some other Father who neither cares about nor exercises a providence over our affairs, nay, one who even approves of all sins.

Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V 28.1) *The Distinction to Be Made Between the Righteous and the Wicked. The Future Apostasy in the Time of Anti-Christ, and the End of the World.*

1. Inasmuch, then, as in this world (ai0w=ni) some persons betake themselves to the light, and by faith unite themselves with God, but others shun the light, and separate themselves from God, the Word of God comes preparing a fit habitation for both. For those indeed who are in the light, that they may derive enjoyment from it, and from the good things contained in it; but for those in darkness, that they may partake in its calamities. And on this account He says, that those upon the right hand are called into the kingdom of heaven, but that those on the left He will send into eternal fire for they have deprived themselves of all good.

2. And for this reason the apostle says: "Because they received not the love of God, that they might be saved, therefore God shall also send them the operation of error, that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but consented to unrighteousness." For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly "be cast into the lake of fire: " [this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, "that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness; "whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: "And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might. And one of his heads was as it were slain unto death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto this beast, and who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemy and power was given to him during forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation. And all who dwell upon the earth worshipped him, [every one] whose name was not written in the book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

If any one have ears, let him hear. If any one shall lead into captivity, he shall go into captivity. If any shall slay with the sword, he must be slain with the sword. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints." After this he likewise describes his armour-bearer, whom he also terms a false prophet: "He spake as a dragon, and exercised all the power of the first beast in his sight, and caused the earth, and those that dwell therein, to adore the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he shall perform great wonders, so that he can even cause fire to descend from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men, and he shall lead the inhabitants of the earth astray." Let no one imagine that he performs these wonders by divine power, but by the working of magic. And we must not be surprised if, since the demons and apostate spirits are at his service, he through their means performs wonders, by which he leads the inhabitants of the earth astray. John says further: "And he shall order an image of the beast to be made, and he shall give breath to the image, so that the image shall speak; and he shall cause those to be slain who will not adore it." He says also: "And he will cause a mark [to be put] in the forehead and in the right hand, that no one may be able to buy or sell, unless he who has the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name; and the number is six hundred and sixty-six," that is, six times a hundred, six times ten, and six units. [He gives this] as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years.

3. For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: "Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works." This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year.

4. And therefore throughout all time, man, having been moulded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit, is made after the image and likeness of God: the chaff, indeed, which is the apostasy, being cast away; but the wheat, that is, those who bring forth fruit to God in faith, being gathered into the barn. And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire [for purification], they may be fitted for the royal banquet. As a certain man of ours said, when he was condemned to the wild beasts because of his testimony with respect to God: "I am the wheat of Christ, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God."

Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V 29.1) *All Things Have Been Created for the Service of Man. The Deceits, Wickedness, and Apostate Power of Antichrist. This Was Prefigured at the Deluge, as Afterwards by the Persecution of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.*

1. In the previous books I have set forth the causes for which God permitted these things to be made, and have pointed out that all such have been created for the benefit of that human nature which is saved, ripening for immortality that which is [possessed] of its own free will and its own power, and preparing and rendering it more adapted for eternal subjection to God. And therefore the creation is suited to [the wants of] man; for man was not made for its sake, but creation for the sake of man. Those nations however, who did not of themselves raise up their eyes unto heaven, nor returned thanks to their Maker, nor wished to behold the light of truth, but who were like blind mice concealed in the depths of ignorance, the word justly reckons "as waste water from a sink, and as the turning-weight of a balance-in fact, as nothing;" so far useful and serviceable to the just, as stubble conduces towards the growth of the wheat, and its straw, by means of combustion,

serves for working gold. And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, "There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be." For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.

2. And there is therefore in this beast, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire. Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels. For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah. And [Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just. For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men. Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, and the number of the cubits of the image for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of the name of that man in whom is concentrated the whole apostasy of six thousand years, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things' sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth].

Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V 30.1) *Although Certain as to the Number of the Name of Antichrist, Yet We Should Come to No Rash Conclusions as to the Name Itself, Because This Number is Capable of Being Fitted to Many Names. Reasons for This Point Being Reserved by the Holy Spirit. Antichrist's Reign and Death.*

1. Such, then, being the state of the case, and this number being found in all the most approved and ancient copies [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face bearing their testimony [to it]; while reason also leads us to conclude that the number of the name of the beast, [if reckoned] according to the Greek mode of calculation by the [value of] the letters contained in it, will amount to six hundred and sixty and six; that is, the number of tens shall be equal to that of the hundreds, and the number of hundreds equal to that of the units (for that number which [expresses] the digit six being adhered to throughout, indicates the recapitulations of that apostasy, taken in its full extent, which occurred at the beginning, during the intermediate periods, and which shall take place at the end),-I do not know how it is that some have erred following the ordinary mode of speech, and have vitiated the middle number in the name, deducting the amount of fifty from it, so that instead of six decads they will have it that there is but one. [I am inclined to think that this occurred through the fault of the copyists, as is wont to happen, since numbers also are expressed by letters; so that the Greek letter which expresses the number sixty was easily expanded into the letter Iota of the Greeks.] Others then received this reading without examination; some in their simplicity, and upon their own responsibility, making use of this number expressing one decad; while some, in their inexperience, have ventured to seek out a name which should contain the erroneous and spurious number. Now, as regards those who have done this in simplicity, and without evil intent, we are at liberty to assume that pardon will be granted them by God. But as for those who, for the sake of vainglory, lay it down for certain that names containing the spurious

number are to be accepted, and affirm that this name, hit upon by themselves, is that of him who is to come; such persons shall not come forth without loss, because they have led into error both themselves and those who confided in them. Now, in the first place, it is loss to wander from the truth, and to imagine that as being the case which is not; then again, as there shall be no light punishment [inflicted] upon him who either adds or subtracts anything from the Scripture, under that such a person must necessarily fall. Moreover, another danger, by no means trifling, shall overtake those who falsely presume that they know the name of Antichrist. For if these men assume one [number], when this [Antichrist] shall come having another, they will be easily led away by him, as supposing him not to be the expected one, who must be guarded against.

2. These men, therefore, ought to learn [what really is the state of the case], and go back to the true number of the name, that they be not reckoned among false prophets. But, knowing the sure number declared by Scripture, that is, six hundred sixty and six, let them await, in the first place, the division of the kingdom into ten; then, in the next place, when these kings are reigning, and beginning to set their affairs in order, and advance their kingdom, [let them learn] to acknowledge that he who shall come claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking, having a name containing the aforesaid number, is truly the abomination of desolation. This, too, the apostle affirms: "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them." And Jeremiah does not merely point out his sudden coming, but he even indicates the tribe from which he shall come, where he says, "We shall hear the voice of his swift horses from Dan; the whole earth shall be moved by the voice of the neighing of his galloping horses: he shall also come and devour the earth, and the fulness thereof, the city also, and they that dwell therein." This, too, is the reason that this tribe is not reckoned in the Apocalypse along with those which are saved.

3. It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to await the fulfilment of the prophecy, than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and the same question will, after all, remain unsolved. For if there are many names found possessing this number, it will be asked which among them shall the coming man bear. It is not through a want of names containing the number of that name that I say this, but on account of the fear of God, and zeal for the truth: for the name Evanthis (Euanqas) contains the required number, but I make no allegation regarding it. Then also Lateinos (Lateinos) has the number six hundred and sixty-six; and it is a very probable [solution], this being the name of the last kingdom [of the four seen by Daniel]. For the Latins are they who at present bear rule: I will not, however, make any boast over this [coincidence]. Teitan too, (Teitan, the first syllable being written with the two Greek vowels e and i), among all the names which are found among us, is rather worthy of credit. For it has in itself the predicted number, and is composed of six letters, each syllable containing three letters; and [the word itself] is ancient, and removed from ordinary use; for among our kings we find none bearing this name Titan, nor have any of the idols which are worshipped in public among the Greeks and barbarians this appellation. Among many persons, too, this name is accounted divine, so that even the sun is termed "Titan" by those who do now possess [the rule]. This word, too, contains a certain outward appearance of vengeance, and of one inflicting merited punishment because he (Antichrist) pretends that he vindicates the oppressed. And besides this, it is an ancient name, one worthy of credit, of royal dignity, and still further, a name belonging to a tyrant. Inasmuch, then, as this name "Titan" has so much to recommend it, there is a strong degree of probability, that from among the many [names suggested], we infer, that perchance he who is to come shall be called "Titan." We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since,

but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign.

4. But he indicates the number of the name now, that when this man comes we may avoid him, being aware who he is: the name, however, is suppressed, because it is not worthy of being proclaimed by the Holy Spirit. For if it had been declared by Him, he (Antichrist) might perhaps continue for a long period. But now as "he was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the abyss, and goes into perdition," as one who has no existence; so neither has his name been declared, for the name of that which does not exist is not proclaimed. But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that "many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.10 – *Unity of the Faith of the Church Throughout the Whole World.*

1. The Church, though dispersed through our the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father "to gather all things in one," and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, "every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess" to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send "spiritual wickednesses," and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.

2. As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world. But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth. Nor will any one of the rulers in the Churches, however highly gifted he may be in point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these (for no one is greater than the Master); nor, on the other hand, will he who is deficient in power of expression inflict injury on the tradition. For the faith being ever one and the same, neither does one who is able at great length to discourse regarding it, make any addition to it, nor does one, who can

say but little diminish it.

Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170-c. 236) held that the Antichrist would come from the tribe of Dan and would rebuild the Jewish temple in order to reign from it. He identified the Antichrist with the Beast out of the Earth from the book of Revelation.

By the beast, then, coming up out of the earth, he means the kingdom of Antichrist; and by the two horns he means him and the false prophet after him. And in speaking of "the horns being like a lamb," he means that he will make himself like the Son of God, and set himself forward as king. And the terms, "he spake like a dragon," mean that he is a deceiver, and not truthful.[36]

(*Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*) 6. Now, as our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also God, was prophesied of under the figure of a lion, on account of His royalty and glory, in the same way have the Scriptures also aforetime spoken of Antichrist as a lion, on account of his tyranny and violence. For the deceiver seeks to liken himself in all things to the Son of God. Christ is a lion, so Antichrist is also a lion; Christ is a king, so Antichrist is also a king. The Saviour was manifested as a lamb; so he too, in like manner, will appear as a lamb, though within he is a wolf. The Saviour came into the World in the circumcision, and he will come in the same manner. The Lord sent apostles among all the nations, and he in like manner will send false apostles. The Saviour gathered together the sheep that were scattered abroad, and he in like manner will bring together a people that is scattered abroad. The Lord gave a seal to those who believed on Him, and he will give one like manner. The Saviour appeared in the form of man, and he too will come in the form of a man. The Saviour raised up and showed His holy flesh like a temple, and he will raise a temple of stone in Jerusalem. And his seductive arts we shall exhibit in what follows. But for the present let us turn to the question in hand.

14. Thus did the Scriptures preach before-time of this lion and lion's whelp. And in like manner also we find it written regarding Antichrist. For Moses speaks thus: "Dan is a lion's whelp, and he shall leap from Bashan." But that no one may err by supposing that this is said of the Saviour, let him attend carefully to the matter. "Dan," he says, "is a lion's whelp;" and in naming the tribe of Dan, he declared clearly the tribe from which Antichrist is destined to spring. For as Christ springs from the tribe of Judah, so Antichrist is to spring from the tribe of Dan. And that the case stands thus, we see also from the words of Jacob: "Let Dan be 'a serpent, lying upon the ground, biting the horse's heel.'" What, then, is meant by the serpent but Antichrist, that deceiver who is mentioned in Genesis, who deceived Eve and supplanted Adam (pternisas, bruised Adam's heel)? But since it is necessary to prove this assertion by sufficient testimony, we shall not shrink from the task.

15. That it is in reality out of the tribe of Dan, then, that that tyrant and king, that dread judge, that son of the devil, is destined to spring and arise, the prophet testifies when he says, "Dan shall judge his people, as (he is) also one tribe in Israel." But some one may say that this refers to Samson, who sprang from the tribe of Dan, and judged the people twenty years. Well, the prophecy had its partial fulfilment in Samson, but its complete fulfilment is reserved for Antichrist. For Jeremiah also speaks to this effect: "From Dan we are to hear the sound of the swiftness of his horses: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing, of the driving of his horses." And another prophet says: "He shall gather together all his strength, from the east even to the west. They whom he calls, and they whom he calls not, shall go with him. He shall make the sea white with the sails of his ships, and the plain black with the shields of his armaments. And whosoever shall oppose him in war shall fall by the sword." That these things, then, are said of no one else but that tyrant, and shameless one, and adversary of God, we shall show in what follows.

16. But Isaiah also speaks thus: "And it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will punish (visit) the stout mind, the king of Assyria, and the greatness (height) of the glory of his eyes. For he said, By my strength will I do it, and by the wisdom of my understanding I will remove the bounds of the peoples, and will rob them of their strength: and I will make the inhabited cities tremble, and will gather the whole world in my hand like a nest, and I will lift it up like eggs that are left. And there is no one that shall escape or gainsay me, and open the mouth and chatter. Shall the axe boast itself without him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself without him that shaketh (draweth) it? As if one should raise a rod or a staff, and the staff should lift itself up: and not thus. But the Lord shall send dishonour unto thy honour; and into thy glory a burning fire shall burn. And the light of Israel shall be a fire, and shall sanctify him in flame, and shall consume the forest like grass."

17. And again he says in another place: "How bath the exactor ceased, and how hath the oppressor ceased! God hath broken the yoke of the rulers of sinners, He who smote the people in wrath, and with an incurable stroke: He that strikes the people with an incurable stroke, which He did not spare. He ceased (rested) confidently: the whole earth shouts with rejoicing. The trees of Lebanon rejoiced at thee, and the cedar of Lebanon, (saying), Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved at meeting thee: all the mighty ones, the rulers of the earth, are gathered together--the lords from their thrones. All the kings of the nations, all they shall answer together, and shall say, And thou, too, art taken as we; and thou art reckoned among us. Thy pomp is brought down to earth, thy great rejoicing: they will spread decay under thee; and the worm shall be thy covering. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! He is cast down to the ground who sends off to all the nations. And thou didst say in thy mind, I will ascend into heaven, I will set my throne above the stars of heaven: I will sit down upon the lofty mountains towards the north: I will ascend above the clouds: I will be like the Most High. Yet now thou shalt be brought down to hell, and to the foundations of the earth! They that see thee shall wonder at thee, and shall say, This is the man that excited the earth, that did shake kings, that made the whole world a wilderness, and destroyed the cities, that released not those in prison. All the kings of the earth did lie in honour, every one in his own house; but thou shall be cast out on the mountains like a loathsome carcase, with many who fall, pierced through with the sword, and going down to hell. As a garment stained with blood is not pure, so neither shall thou be comely (or clean); because thou hast destroyed my land, and slain my people. Thou shalt not abide, enduring for ever, a wicked seed. Prepare thy children for slaughter, for the sins of thy father, that they rise not, neither possess my land."

18. Ezekiel also speaks of him to the same effect, thus: "Thus saith the Lord God, Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the sea; yet art thou a man, and not God, (though) thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God. Art thou wiser than Daniel? Have the wise not instructed thee in their wisdom? With thy wisdom or with thine understanding hast thou gotten thee power, and gold and silver in thy treasures? By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy power? Thy heart is lifted up in thy power. Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God: behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, plagues from the nations: and they shall draw their swords against thee, and against the beauty of thy wisdom; and they shall level thy beauty to destruction; and they shall bring thee down; and thou shall die by the death of the wounded in the midst of the sea. Wilt thou yet say before them that slay thee, I am God? But thou art a man, and no God, in the hand of them that wound thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord."

19. These words then being thus presented, let us observe somewhat in detail what Daniel says in his visions. For in distinguishing the kingdoms that are to rise after these things, he showed also the

coming of Antichrist in the last times, and the consummation of the whole world. In expounding the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, then, he speaks thus: "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image standing before thy face: the head of which was of fine gold, its arms and shoulders of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, and its legs of iron, (and) its feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest, then, till that a stone was cut out without hands, and smote the image upon the feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to an end. Then were the clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, (and) the gold broken, and became like the chaff from the summer threshing-floor; and the strength (fulness) of the wind carried them away, and there was no place found for them. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

25. Then he says: "A fourth beast, dreadful and terrible; it had iron teeth and claws of brass." And who are these but the Romans? which (kingdom) is meant by the iron--the kingdom which is now established; for the legs of that (image) were of iron. And after this, what remains, beloved, but the toes of the feet of the image, in which part is iron and part clay, mixed together?

And mystically by the toes of the feet he meant the kings who are to arise from among them; as Daniel also says (in the words), "I considered the beast, and lo there were ten horns behind it, among which shall rise another (horn), an offshoot, and shall pluck up by the roots the three (that were) before it."

And under this was signified none other than Antichrist, who is also himself to raise the kingdom of the Jews. He says that three horns are plucked up by the root by him, viz., the three kings of Egypt, and Libya, and Ethiopia, whom he cuts off in the array of battle. And he, after gaining terrible power over all, being nevertheless a tyrant, shall stir up tribulation and persecution against men, exalting himself against them. For Daniel says: "I considered the horn, and behold that horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, till the beast was slain and perished, and its body was given to the burning of fire."

26. After a little space the stone will come from heaven which smites the image and breaks it in pieces, and subverts all the kingdoms, and gives the kingdom to the saints of the Most High. This is the stone which becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth, of which Daniel says: "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and was brought near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; and all peoples, tribes, and languages shall serve Him: and His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed." He showed all power given by the Father to the Son, who is ordained Lord of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and Judge of all: of things in heaven, because He was born, the Word of God, before all (ages); and of things on earth, because He became man in the midst of men, to re-create our Adam through Himself; and of things under the earth, because He was also reckoned among the dead, preaching the Gospel to the souls of the saints, (and) by death overcoming death.

27. As these things, then, are in the future, and as the ten toes of the image are equivalent to (so many) democracies, and the ten horns of the fourth beast are distributed over ten kingdoms, let us look at the subject a little more closely, and consider these matters as in the clear light of a personal survey.

28. The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander's time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are yet to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their

midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ.

29. These things, beloved, we impart to you with fear, and yet readily, on account of the love of Christ, which surpasseth all. For if the blessed prophets who preceded us did not choose to proclaim these things, though they knew them, openly and boldly, lest they should disquiet the souls of men, but recounted them mystically in parables and dark sayings, speaking thus, "Here is the mind which hath wisdom," how much greater risk shall we run in venturing to declare openly things spoken by them in obscure terms! Let us look, therefore, at the things which are to befall this unclean harlot in the last days; and (let us consider) what and what manner of tribulation is destined to visit her in the wrath of God before the judgment as an earnest of her doom.

30. Come, then, O blessed Isaiah; arise, tell us clearly what thou didst prophesy with respect to the mighty Babylon. For thou didst speak also of Jerusalem, and thy word is accomplished. For thou didst speak boldly and openly: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by many strangers. The daughter of Sion shall be left as a cottage in a vineyard, and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city."

What then? Are not these things come to pass? Are not the things announced by thee fulfilled? Is not their country, Judea, desolate? Is not the holy place burned with fire? Are not their walls cast down? Are not their cities destroyed? Their land, do not strangers devour it? Do not the Romans rule the country? And indeed these impious people hated thee, and did saw thee asunder, and they crucified Christ. Thou art dead in the world, but thou livest in Christ.

47. For John says, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." That is the half of the week whereof Daniel spake. "These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire will proceed out of their mouth, and devour their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their course and their testimony," what saith the prophet? "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them," because they will not give glory to Antichrist. For this is meant by the little horn that grows up. He, being now elated in heart, begins to exalt himself, and to glorify himself as God, persecuting the saints and blaspheming Christ, even as Daniel says, "I considered the horn, and, behold, in the horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things; and he opened his mouth to blaspheme God.

And that born made war against the saints, and prevailed against them until the beast was slain, and perished, and his body was given to be burned."

48. But as it is incumbent on us to discuss this matter of the beast more exactly, and in particular the question how the Holy Spirit has also mystically indicated his name by means of a number, we shall proceed to state more clearly what bears upon him. John then speaks thus: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns, like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him; and he made the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he did great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not

worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for if is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six."

49. By the beast, then, coming up out of the earth, he means the kingdom of Antichrist; and by the two horns he means him and the false prophet after him. And in speaking of "the horns being like a lamb," he means that he will make himself like the Son of God, and set himself forward as king. And the terms, "he spake like a dragon," mean that he is a deceiver, and not truthful. And the words, "he exercised all the power of the first beast before him, and caused the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed," signify that, after the manner of the law of Augustus, by whom the empire of Rome was established, he too will rule and govern, sanctioning everything by it, and taking greater glory to himself.

For this is the fourth beast, whose head was wounded and healed again, in its being broken up or even dishonoured, and partitioned into four crowns; and he then (Antichrist) shall with knavish skill heal it, as it were, and restore it. For this is what is meant by the prophet when he says, "He will give life unto the image, and the image of the beast will speak." For he will act with vigour again, and prove strong by reason of the laws established by him; and he will cause all those who will not worship the image of the beast to be put to death. Here the faith and the patience of the saints will appear, for he says: "And he will cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead; that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name." For, being full of guile, and exalting himself against the servants of God, with the wish to afflict them and persecute them out of the world, because they give not glory to him, he will order incense-pans to be set up by all everywhere, that no man among the saints may be able to buy or sell without first sacrificing; for this is what is meant by the mark received upon the right hand. And the word--"in their forehead"--indicates that all are crowned, and put on a crown of fire, and not of life, but of death. For in this wise, too, did Antiochus Epiphanes the king of Syria, the descendant of Alexander of Macedon, devise measures against the Jews. He, too, in the exaltation of his heart, issued a decree in those times, that "all should set up shrines before their doors, and sacrifice, and that they should march in procession to the honour of Dionysus, waving chaplets of ivy;" and that those who refused obedience should be put to death by strangulation and torture. But he also met his due recompense at the hand of the Lord, the righteous Judge and all-searching God; for he died eaten up of worms. And if one desires to inquire into that more accurately, he will find it recorded in the books of the Maccabees.

50. But now we shall speak of what is before us. For such measures will he, too, devise, seeking to afflict the saints in every way. For the prophet and apostle says: "Here is wisdom, Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six." With respect to his name, it is not in our power to explain it exactly, as the blessed John understood it and was instructed about it, but only to give a conjectural account of it; for when he appears, the blessed one will show us what we seek to know. Yet as far as our doubtful apprehension of the matter goes, we may speak. Many names indeed we find, the letters of which are the equivalent of this number: such as, for instance, the word Titan, an ancient and notable name; or Evanthas, for it too makes up the same number; and many others which might be found. But, as we have already said, the wound of the first beast was healed, and he (the second beast) was to make the image speak, that is to say, he should be powerful; and it is manifest to all that those who at present still hold the power are Latins. If, then, we take the name as the name of a single man, it becomes Latins. Wherefore we ought neither to give it out as if this were

certainly his name, nor again ignore the fact that he may not be otherwise designated. But having the mystery of God in our heart, we ought in fear to keep faithfully what has been told us by the blessed prophets, in order that when those things come to pass, we may be prepared for them, and not deceived. For when the times advance, he too, of whom these things are said, will be manifested.

51. But not to confine ourselves to these words and arguments alone, for the purpose of convincing those who love to study the oracles of God, we shall demonstrate the matter by many other proofs. For Daniel says, "And these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." Ammon and Moab are the children born to Lot by his daughters, and their race survives even now. And Isaiah says: "And they shall fly in the boats of strangers, plundering the sea together, and (they shall spoil) them of the east: and they shall lay hands upon Moab first; and the children of Ammon shall first obey them."

52. In those times, then, he shall arise and meet them. And when he has overmastered three horns out of the ten in the array of war, and has rooted these out, viz., Egypt, and Libya, and Ethiopia, and has got their spoils and trappings, and has brought the remaining horns which suffer into subjection, he will begin to be lifted up in heart, and to exalt himself against God as master of the whole world. And his first expedition will be against Tyre and Berytus, and the circumjacent territory. For by storming these cities first he will strike terror into the others, as Isaiah says, "Be thou ashamed, O Sidon; the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea hath spoken, saying, I travailed not, nor brought forth children; neither did I nurse up young men, nor bring up virgins. But when the report comes to Egypt, pain shall seize them for Tyre."

53. These things, then, shall be in the future, beloved; and when the three horns are cut off, he will begin to show himself as God, as Ezekiel has said aforetime: "Because thy heart has been lifted up, and thou hast said, I am God." And to the like effect Isaiah says: "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven: I will be like the Most High. Yet now thou shalt be brought down to hell (Hades), to the foundations of the earth." In like manner also Ezekiel: "Wilt thou yet say to those who slay thee, I am God? But thou (shall be) a man, and no God."

54. As his tribe, then, and his manifestation, and his destruction, have been set forth in these words, and as his name has also been indicated mystically, let us look also at his action. For he will call together all the people to himself, out of every country of the dispersion, making them his own, as though they were his own children, and promising to restore their country, and establish again their kingdom and nation, in order that he may be worshipped by them as God, as the prophet says: "He will collect his whole kingdom, from the rising of the sun even to its setting: they whom he summons and they whom he does not summon shall march with him." And Jeremiah speaks of him thus in a parable: "The partridge cried, (and) gathered what he did not hatch, making himself riches without judgment: in the midst of his days they shall leave him, and at his end he shall be a fool."

55. It will not be detrimental, therefore, to the course of our present argument, if we explain the art of that creature, and show that the prophet has not spoken without a purpose in using the parable (or similitude) of the creature. For as the partridge is a vainglorious creature, when it sees near at hand the nest of another partridge with young in it, and with the parent-bird away on the wing in quest of food, it imitates the cry of the other bird, and calls the young to itself; and they, taking it to be their own parent, run to it. And it delights itself proudly in the alien pullets as in its own. But when the real parent-bird returns, and calls them with its own familiar cry, the young recognise it, and forsake the deceiver, and betake themselves to the real parent. This thing, then, the prophet has adopted as a simile, applying it in a similar manner to Antichrist. For he will allure mankind to himself, wishing to gain possession of those who are not his own, and promising deliverance to all, while he is unable to save himself.

56. He then, having gathered to himself the unbelieving everywhere throughout the world, comes at their call to persecute the saints, their enemies and antagonists, as the apostle and evangelist says: "There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city, who came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her."

57. By the unrighteous judge, who fears not God, neither regards man, he means without doubt Antichrist, as he is a son of the devil and a vessel of Satan. For when he has the power, he will begin to exalt himself against God, neither in truth fearing God, nor regarding the Son of God, who is the Judge of all. And in saying that there was a widow in the city, he refers to Jerusalem itself, which is a widow indeed, forsaken of her perfect, heavenly spouse, God. She calls Him her adversary, and not her Saviour; for she does not understand that which was said by the prophet Jeremiah: "Because they obeyed not the truth, a spirit of error shall speak then to this people and to Jerusalem." And Isaiah also to the like effect: "Forasmuch as the people refuseth to drink the water of Siloam that goeth softly, but chooseth to have Rasin and Romeliah's son as king over you: therefore, lo, the Lord bringeth up upon you the water of the river, strong and full, even the king of Assyria." By the king he means metaphorically Antichrist, as also another prophet saith: "And this man shall be the peace from me, when the Assyrian shall come up into your land, and when he shall tread in your mountains."

58. And in like manner Moses, knowing beforehand that the people would reject and disown the true Saviour of the world, and take part with error, and choose an earthly king, and set the heavenly King at nought, says: "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? In the day of vengeance I will recompense (them), and in the time when their foot shall slide." They did slide, therefore, in all things, as they were found to be in harmony with the truth in nothing: neither as concerns the law, because they became transgressors; nor as concerns the prophets, because they cut off even the prophets themselves; nor as concerns the voice of the Gospels, because they crucified the Saviour Himself; nor in believing the apostles, because they persecuted them. At all times they showed themselves enemies and betrayers of the truth, and were found to be haters of God, and not lovers of Him; and such they shall be then when they find opportunity: for, rousing themselves against the servants of God, they will seek to obtain vengeance by the hand of a mortal man. And he, being puffed up with pride by their subserviency, will begin to despatch missives against the saints, commanding to cut them all off everywhere, on the ground of their refusal to reverence and worship him as God, according to the word of Esaias: "Woe to the wings of the vessels of the land, beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: (woe to him) who sendeth sureties by the sea, and letters of papyrus (upon the water; for nimble messengers will go) to a nation anxious and expectant, and a people strange and bitter against them; a nation hopeless and trodden down."

59. But we who hope for the Son of God are persecuted and trodden down by those unbelievers. For the wings of the vessels are the churches; and the sea is the world, in which the Church is set, like a ship tossed in the deep, but not destroyed; for she has with her the skilled Pilot, Christ. And she bears in her midst also the trophy (which is erected) over death; for she carries with her the cross of the Lord. For her prow is the east, and her stern is the west, and her hold is the south, and her tillers are the two Testaments; and the ropes that stretch around her are the love of Christ, which binds the Church; and the net which she bears with her is the layer of the regeneration which renews the believing, whence too are these glories. As the wind the Spirit from heaven is present, by whom those who believe are sealed: she has also anchors of iron accompanying her, viz., the holy commandments of Christ Himself, which are strong as iron. She has also mariners on the right and on the left, assessors like the holy angels, by whom the Church is always governed and

defended. The ladder in her leading up to the sailyard is an emblem of the passion of Christ, which brings the faithful to the ascent of heaven. And the top-sails aloft upon the yard are the company of prophets, martyrs, and apostles, who have entered into their rest in the kingdom of Christ.

60. Now, concerning the tribulation of the persecution which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary, John also speaks thus: "And I saw a great and wondrous sign in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And she, being with child, cries, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man-child, who is to rule all the nations: and the child was caught up unto God and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath the place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And then when the dragon saw it, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast (out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast) out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the saints of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus."

61. By the woman then clothed with the sun," he meant most manifestly the Church, endued with the Father's word, whose brightness is above the sun. And by the "moon under her feet" he referred to her being adorned, like the moon, with heavenly glory. And the words, "upon her head a crown of twelve stars," refer to the twelve apostles by whom the Church was founded. And those, "she, being with child, cries, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered," mean that the Church will not cease to bear from her heart the Word that is persecuted by the unbelieving in the world. "And she brought forth," he says, "a man-child, who is to rule all the nations;" by which is meant that the Church, always bringing forth Christ, the perfect man-child of God, who is declared to be God and man, becomes the instructor of all the nations. And the words, "her child was caught up unto God and to His throne," signify that he who is always born of her is a heavenly king, and not an earthly; even as David also declared of old when he said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." "And the dragon," he says, "saw and persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church, which flees from city to city, and seeks concealment in the wilderness among the mountains, possessed of no other defence than the two wings of the great eagle, that is to say, the faith of Jesus Christ, who, in stretching forth His holy hands on the holy tree, unfolded two wings, the right and the left, and called to Him all who believed upon Him, and covered them as a hen her chickens. For by the mouth of Malachi also He speaks thus: "And unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings."

62. The Lord also says, "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains, and let him which is on the housetop not come down to take his clothes; neither let him which is in the field return back to take anything out of his house. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." And Daniel says, "And they shall place the abomination of desolation a thousand two

hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand two hundred and ninety-five days."

63. And the blessed Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says: "Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together at it, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letters as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for (that day shall not come) except there come the falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth (will let), until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: (even him) whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." And Esaias says, "Let the wicked be cut off, that he behold not the glory of the Lord."

64. These things, then, being to come to pass, beloved, and the one week being divided into two parts, and the abomination of desolation being manifested then, and the two prophets and forerunners of the Lord having finished their course, and the whole world finally approaching the consummation, what remains but the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ from heaven, for whom we have looked in hope? who shall bring the conflagration and just judgment upon all who have refused to believe on Him.

For the Lord says, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." "And there shall not a hair of your head perish." "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Now the fall took place in paradise; for Adam fell there. And He says again, "Then shall the Son of man send His angels, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds of heaven." And David also, in announcing prophetically the judgment and coming of the Lord, says, "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and His circuit unto the end of the heaven: and there is no one hid from the heat thereof." By the heat he means the conflagration. And Esaias speaks thus: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chamber, (and) shut thy door: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation of the Lord be overpast." And Paul in like manner: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness."

65. Moreover, concerning the resurrection and the kingdom of the saints, Daniel says, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, (and some to shame and everlasting contempt)." Esaias says, "The dead men shall arise, and they that are in their tombs shall awake; for the dew from thee is healing to them." The Lord says, "Many in that day shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." And the prophet says, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And John says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." For the second death is the lake of fire that burneth. And again the Lord says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun shineth in his glory." And to the saints He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my

Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But what saith He to the wicked? "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, which my Father hath prepared." And John says, "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever maketh and loveth a lie; for your part is in the hell of fire." And in like manner also Esaias: "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me. And their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be for a spectacle to all flesh."

66. Concerning the resurrection of the righteous, Paul also speaks thus in writing to the Thessalonians: "We would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive (and) remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice and trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive (and) remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

67. These things, then, I have set shortly before thee, O Theophilus, drawing them from Scripture itself, in order that, maintaining in faith what is written, and anticipating the things that are to be, thou mayest keep thyself void of offence both toward God and toward men, "looking for that blessed hope and appearing of our God and Saviour," when, having raised the saints among us, He will rejoice with them, glorifying the Father. To Him be the glory unto the endless ages of the ages. Amen.

Origen (185–254) refuted Celsus's view of the Antichrist. Origen utilized Scriptural citations from Daniel, Paul, and the Gospels. He argued:

Where is the absurdity, then, in holding that there exist among men, so to speak, two extremes-- the one of virtue, and the other of its opposite; so that the perfection of virtue dwells in the man who realizes the ideal given in Jesus, from whom there flowed to the human race so great a conversion, and healing, and amelioration, while the opposite extreme is in the man who embodies the notion of him that is named Antichrist?... one of these extremes, and the best of the two, should be styled the Son of God, on account of His pre-eminence; and the other, who is diametrically opposite, be termed the son of the wicked demon, and of Satan, and of the devil. And, in the next place, since evil is specially characterized by its diffusion, and attains its greatest height when it simulates the appearance of the good, for that reason are signs, and marvels, and lying miracles found to accompany evil, through the cooperation of its father the devil.

Athanasius (c. 293-373), writes that Arius of Alexandria is to be associated with the Antichrist, saying, "And ever since [the Council of Nicaea] has Arius's error been reckoned for a heresy more than ordinary, being known as Christ's foe, and harbinger of Antichrist." [38]

Jerome (c. 347-420) warned that those substituting false interpretations for the actual meaning of Scripture belonged to the "synagogue of the Antichrist". [40] "He that is not of Christ is of Antichrist," he wrote to Pope Damasus I. [41] He believed that "the mystery of iniquity" written about by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 was already in action when "every one chatters about his views." [42] To Jerome, the power restraining this mystery of iniquity was the Roman Empire, but as it fell this restraining force was

removed. He warned a noble woman of Gaul:

“He that letteth is taken out of the way, and yet we do not realize that Antichrist is near. Yes, Antichrist is near whom the Lord Jesus Christ “shall consume with the spirit of his mouth.” “Woe unto them,” he cries, “that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days.”... Savage tribes in countless numbers have overrun run all parts of Gaul. The whole country between the Alps and the Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the Ocean, has been laid waste by hordes of Quadi, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alans, Gepids, Herules, Saxons, Burgundians, Allemanni, and—alas! for the commonweal!-- even Pannonians.[43]

In his Commentary on Daniel, he noted, “Let us not follow the opinion of some commentators and suppose him to be either the Devil or some demon, but rather, one of the human race, in whom Satan will wholly take up his residence in bodily form.” [44] Instead of rebuilding the Jewish Temple to reign from, Jerome thought the Antichrist sat in God's Temple inasmuch as he made “himself out to be like God.” [44] He refuted Porphyry's idea that the “little horn” mentioned in Daniel chapter 7 was Antiochus Epiphanes by noting that the “little horn” is defeated by an eternal, universal ruler, right before the final judgment.[44] Instead, he advocated that the “little horn” was the Antichrist:

We should therefore concur with the traditional interpretation of all the commentators of the Christian Church, that at the end of the world, when the Roman Empire is to be destroyed, there shall be ten kings who will partition the Roman world amongst themselves. Then an insignificant eleventh king will arise, who will overcome three of the ten kings... after they have been slain, the seven other kings also will bow their necks to the victor.[44]

an apocalyptic pseudo-prophecy falsely attributed to the Tiburtine Sibyl (ca 380), describes Constantine as victorious over Gog and Magog. Later on, it predicts:

When the Roman empire shall have ceased, then the Antichrist will be openly revealed and will sit in the House of the Lord in Jerusalem. While he is reigning, two very famous men, Elijah and Enoch, will go forth to announce the coming of the Lord. Antichrist will kill them and after three days they will be raised up by the Lord. Then there will be a great persecution, such as has not been before nor shall be thereafter. The Lord will shorten those days for the sake of the elect, and the Antichrist will be slain by the power of God through Michael the Archangel on the Mount of Olives.[45]

Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430) wrote “it is uncertain in what temple [the Antichrist] shall sit, whether in that ruin of the temple which was built by Solomon, or in the Church.”[46]

Wilhelm Bousset (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed.)

ANTICHRIST (ἀντίχριστος). The earliest mention of the name Antichrist, which was probably first coined in Christian eschatological literature, is in the Epistles of St John (I. ii. 18, 22, iv. 3; II. 7), and it has since come into universal use. The conception, paraphrased in this word, of a mighty ruler who will appear at the end of time, and whose essence will be enmity to God (Dan. xi. 36; cf. 2 Thess. ii. 4; ὁ ἀντικείμενος), is older, and traceable to Jewish eschatology. Its origin is to be sought in the first place in the prophecy of Daniel, written at the beginning of the Maccabean period. The historical figure who served as a model for the “Antichrist” was Antiochus IV. Epiphanes, the persecutor of the Jews, and he has impressed indelible traits upon the conception. Since then ever-recurring characteristics of this figure (cf. especially Dan xi. 40, &c.) are, that he would appear as a mighty ruler at the head of gigantic armies, that he would destroy three rulers (the three horns, Dan. vii. 8, 24), persecute the saints (vii. 25), rule for three and a half years (vii. 25,

&c.), and subject the temple of God to a horrible devastation (βδέλυγμα τ ζ ἐρημώσεως). When the end of the world foretold by Daniel did not take place, but the book of Daniel retained its validity as a sacred scripture which foretold future things, the personality of the tyrant who was God's enemy disengaged itself from that of Antiochus IV., and became merely a figure of prophecy, which was applied now to one and now to another historical phenomenon. Thus for the author of the Psalms of Solomon (c. 60 B.C.), Pompey, who destroyed the independent rule of the Maccabees and stormed Jerusalem, was the Adversary of God (cf. ii. 26, &c.); so too the tyrant whom the Ascension of Moses (c. A.D. 30) expects at the end of all things, possesses, besides the traits of Antiochus IV., those of Herod the Great. A further influence on the development of the eschatological imagination of the Jews was exercised by such a figure as that of the emperor Caligula (A.D. 37–41), who is known to have given the order, never carried out, to erect his statue in the temple of Jerusalem. In the little Jewish Apocalypse, the existence of which is assumed by many scholars, which in Mark xiii. and Matt. xxiv. is combined with the words of Christ to form the great eschatological discourse, the prophecy of the “abomination of desolation” (Mark xiii. 14 et seq.) may have originated in this episode of Jewish history. Later Jewish and Christian writers of Apocalypses saw in Nero the tyrant of the end of time. The author of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch (or his source), cap. 36-40, speaks in quite general terms of the last ruler of the end of time. In 4 Ezra v. 6 also is found the allusion: *regnabit quem non sperant*.

The roots of this eschatological fancy are to be sought perhaps still deeper in a purely mythological and speculative expectation of a battle at the end of days between God and the devil, which has no reference whatever to historical occurrences. This idea has its original source in the apocalypses of Iran, for these are based upon the conflict between Ahura-Mazda (Auramazda, Ormazd) and Angrō-Mainyush (Ahriman) and its consummation at the end of the world. This Iranian dualism is proved to have penetrated into the late Jewish eschatology from the beginning of the 1st century before Christ, and did so probably still earlier. Thus the opposition between God and the devil already plays a part in the Jewish groundwork of the Testaments of the Patriarchs, which was perhaps composed at the end of the period of the Maccabees. In this the name of the devil appears, besides the usual form (σαταν ζ, διάβολος), especially as Belial (Beliar, probably, from Ps. xviii. 4, where the rivers of Belial are spoken of, originally a god of the underworld), a name which also plays a part in the Antichrist tradition. In the Ascension of Moses we already hear, at the beginning of the description of the latter time (x. 1): “And then will God's rule be made manifest over all his creatures, then will the devil have an end” (cf. Matt. xii. 28; Luke xi. 20; John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11).[1] This conception of the strife of God with the devil was further interwoven, before its introduction into the Antichrist myth, with another idea of different origin, namely, the myth derived from the Babylonian religion, of the battle of the supreme God (Marduk) with the dragon of chaos (Tiamāt), originally a myth of the origin of things which, later perhaps, was changed into an eschatological one, again under Iranian influence.[2] Thus it comes that the devil, the opponent of God, appears in the end often also in the form of a terrible dragon-monster; this appears most clearly in Rev. xii. Now it is possible that the whole conception of Antichrist has its final roots in this already complicated myth, that the form of the mighty adversary of God is but the equivalent in human form of the devil or of the dragon of chaos. In any case, however, this myth has exercised a formative influence on the conception of Antichrist. For only thus can we explain how his figure acquires numerous superhuman and ghostly traits, which cannot be explained by any particular historical phenomenon on which it may have been based. Thus the figure of Antiochus IV. has already become superhuman, when in Dan. viii. 10, it is said that the little horn “waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground.” Similarly Pompey, in the second psalm of Solomon, is obviously represented as the dragon of chaos, and his figure exalted into myth. Without this assumption of a continual infusion of mythological conceptions, we cannot understand the figure of Antichrist. Finally, it must be mentioned that Antichrist receives, at least in the later sources, the name originally proper to the devil himself.[3]

From the Jews, Christianity took over the idea. It is present quite unaltered in certain passages, specifically traceable to Judaism, e.g. (Rev. xi.). “The Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit” and, surrounded by a mighty host of nations, slays the “two witnesses” in Jerusalem, is the entirely superhuman Jewish conception of Antichrist. Even if the beast (ch. xiii.), which rises from the sea at the summons of the devil, be interpreted as the Roman empire, and, specially, as any particular Roman ruler, yet the original form of the malevolent tyrant of the latter time is completely preserved.

A fundamental change of the whole idea from the specifically Christian point of view, then, is signified by the conclusion of ch. ii. of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.[4] There can, of course, be no doubt as to the identity of the “man of sin, the son of perdition” here described with the dominating figure of Jewish eschatology (cf. ii. 3 &c., ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, i.e. Beliar (?), ὁ ἀντικείμενος—the allusion that follows to Dan xi. 36). But Antichrist here appears as a tempter, who works by signs and wonders (ii. 9) and seeks to obtain divine honours; it is further signified that this “man of sin” will obtain credence, more especially among the Jews, because they have not accepted the truth. The conception, moreover, has become almost more superhuman than ever (cf. ii. 4, “showing himself that he is God”). The destruction of the Adversary is drawn from Isaiah xi. 4, where it is said of the Messiah: “with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”[5] The idea that Antichrist was to establish himself in the temple of Jerusalem (ii. 4) is very enigmatical, and has not yet been explained. The “abomination of desolation” has naturally had its influence upon it; possibly also the experience of the time of Caligula (see above). Remarkable also is the allusion to a power which still retards the revelation of Antichrist (2 Thess. ii. 6 &c., τὸ κατέχον; ὁ κατέχων), an allusion which, in the tradition of the Fathers of the church, came to be universally, and probably correctly, referred to the Roman empire. In this then consists the significant turn given by St Paul in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians to the whole conception, namely, in the substitution for the tyrant of the latter time who should persecute the Jewish people, of a pseudo-Messianic figure, who, establishing himself in the temple of God, should find credence and a following precisely among the Jews. And while the originally Jewish idea led straight to the conception, set forth in Revelation, of the Roman empire or its ruler as Antichrist, here, on the contrary, it is probably the Roman empire that is the power which still retards the reign of Antichrist. With this, the expectation of such an event at last separates itself from any connexion with historical fact, and becomes purely ideal. In this process of transformation of the idea, which has become of importance for the history of the world, is revealed probably the genius of Paul, or at any rate, that of the young Christianity which was breaking its ties with Judaism and establishing itself in the world of the Roman empire.

This version of the figure of Antichrist, who may now really for the first time be described by this name, appears to have been at once widely accepted in Christendom. The idea that the Jews would believe in Antichrist, as punishment for not having believed in the true Christ, seems to be expressed by the author of the fourth gospel (v. 43). The conception of Antichrist as a perverter of men, leads naturally to his connexion with false doctrine (1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3; 2 John 7). The Teaching of the Apostles (xvi. 4) describes his form in the same way as 2 Thessalonians (καὶ τότε φανήσεται ὁ κοσμοπλάνος ὡς υἱὸς θεοῦ καὶ ποιεῖ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα). In the late Christian Sibylline fragment (iii. 63 &c.) also, “Beliar” appears above all as a worker of wonders, this figure having possibly been influenced by that of Simon Magus. Finally the author of the Apocalypse of St John also has made use of the new conception of Antichrist as a wonder-worker and seducer, and has set his figure beside that of the “first” Beast which was for him the actual embodiment of Antichrist (xiii. II &c.). Since this second Beast could not appear along with the first as a power demanding worship and directly playing the part of Antichrist, he made out of him the false prophet (xvi. 13, xix. 20, xx. 10) who seduces the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first Beast, and probably interpreted this figure as applying to the Roman provincial priesthood.[6]

But this version of the idea of Antichrist, hostile to the Jews and better expressing the relation of Christianity to the Roman empire, was prevented from obtaining an absolute ascendancy in Christian tradition by the rise of the belief in the ultimate return of Nero, and by the absorption of this outcome of pagan superstition into the Jewish-Christian apocalyptic conceptions. It is known that soon after the death of Nero rumours were current that he was not dead. This report soon took the more concrete form that he had fled to the Parthians and would return thence to take vengeance on Rome. This expectation led to the appearance of several pretenders who posed as Nero; and as late as A.D. 100 many still held the belief that Nero yet lived.[7] This idea of Nero's return was in the first instance taken up by the Jewish apocalyptic writers. While the Jewish author of the fourth Sibylline book (c. A.D. 80) still only refers simply to the heathen belief, the author of the (Jewish?) original of the 17th chapter of the Apocalypse of St John expects the return of Nero with the Parthians to take vengeance on Rome, because she had shed the blood of the Saints (destruction of Jerusalem!). In the fifth Sibylline book, which, with the exception of verses 1-51, was mainly composed by a Jewish writer at the close of the first century, the return of Nero plays a great part. Three times the author recurs to this theme, 137-154; 214-227; 361-385. He sees in the coming again of Nero, whose figure he endows with supernatural and daemonic characteristics, a judgment of God, in whose hand the revived Nero becomes a rod of chastisement. Later, the figure of Nero redivivus became, more especially in Christian thought, entirely confused with that of Antichrist. The less it became possible, as time went on, to believe that Nero yet lived and would return as a living ruler, the greater was the tendency for his figure to develop into one wholly infernal and daemonic. The relation to the Parthians is also gradually lost sight of; and from being the adversary of Rome, Nero becomes the adversary of God and of Christ. This is the version of the expectation of Nero's second coming preserved in the form given to the prophecy, under Domitian, by the collaborator in the Apocalypse of John (xiii., xvii.). Nero is here the beast that returns from the bottomless pit, "that was, and is not, and yet is"; the head "as it were wounded to death" that lives again; the gruesome similitude of the Lamb that was slain, and his adversary in the final struggle. The number of the Beast, 666, points certainly to Nero (קס"ו נרון = 666, or קס"ו נרו = 616). In the little apocalypse of the Ascensio Jesaiae (iii. 13b-iv. 18), which dates perhaps from the second, perhaps only from the first, decade of the third century,[8] it is said that Beliar, the king of this world, would descend from the firmament in the human form of Nero. In the same way, in Sibyll. v. 28-34, Nero and Antichrist are absolutely identical (mostly obscure reminiscences, Sib. viii. 68 &c., 140 &c., 151 &c.). Then the Nero-legend gradually fades away. But Victorinus of Pettau, who wrote during the persecution under Diocletian, still knows the relation of the Apocalypse to the legend of Nero; and Commodian, whose *Carmen Apologeticum* was perhaps not written until the beginning of the 4th century, knows two Antichrist-figures, of which he still identifies the first with Nero redivivus.

In proportion as the figure of Nero again ceased to dominate the imagination of the faithful, the wholly unhistorical, unpolitical and anti-Jewish conception of Antichrist, which based itself more especially on 2 Thess. ii., gained the upper hand, having usually become associated with the description of the universal conflagration of the world which had also originated in the Iranian eschatology. On the strength of exegetical combinations, and with the assistance of various traditions, it was developed even in its details, which it thenceforth maintained practically unchanged. In this form it is in great part present in the eschatological portions of the *Adv. Haereses* of Irenaeus, and in the *de Antichristo* and commentary on Daniel of Hippolytus. In times of political excitement, during the following centuries, men appealed again and again to the prophecy of Antichrist. Then the foreground scenery of the prophecies was shifted; special prophecies, having reference to contemporary events, are pushed to the front, but in the background remains standing, with scarcely a change, the prophecy of Antichrist that is bound up with no particular time. Thus at the beginning of the *Testamentum Domini*, edited by Rahmani, there is an apocalypse, possibly of the time of Decius, though it has been worked over (Harnack, *Chronol. der altchrist. Litt.* ii. 514 &c.) In the third century, the period of Aurelianus and Gallienus, with its wild warfare of Romans and

Persians, and of Roman pretenders one with another, seems especially to have aroused the spirit of prophecy. To this period belongs the Jewish apocalypse of Elijah (ed. Bittenwieser), of which the Antichrist is possibly Odaenathus of Palmyra, while Sibyll. xiii., a Christian writing of this period, glorifies this very prince. It is possible that at this time also the Sibylline fragment (iii. 63 &c.) and the Christian recension of the two first Sibylline books were written.[9] To this time possibly belongs also a recension of the Coptic apocalypse of Elijah, edited by Steindorff (Texte und Untersuchungen, N. F. ii. 3). To the 4th century belongs, according to Kamper (Die deutsche Kaiseridee, 1896, p. 18) and Sackur (Texte und Forschungen, 1898, p. 114 &c.), the first nucleus of the "Tiburtine" Sibyl, very celebrated in the middle ages, with its prophecy of the return of Constans, and its dream, which later on exercised so much influence, that after ruling over the whole world he would go to Jerusalem and lay down his crown upon Golgotha. To the 4th century also perhaps belongs a series of apocalyptic pieces and homilies which have been handed down under the name of Ephraem. At the beginning of the Mahommedan period, then, we meet with the most influential and the most curious of these prophetic books, the Pseudo-Methodius,[10] which prophesied of the emperor who would awake from his sleep and conquer Islam. From the Pseudo-Methodius are derived innumerable Byzantine prophecies (cf. especially Vassiliev, Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina) which follow the fortunes of the Byzantine emperors and their governments. A prophecy in verse, adorned with pictures, which is ascribed to Leo VI. the Philosopher (Migne, Patr. Gracca, cvii. p. 1121 &c.), tells of the downfall of the house of the Comneni and sings of the emperor of the future who would one day awake from death and go forth from the cave in which he had lain. Thus the prophecy of the sleeping emperor of the future is very closely connected with the Antichrist tradition. There is extant a Daniel prophecy which, in the time of the Latin empire, foretells the restoration of the Greek rule.[11] In the East, too, Antichrist prophecies were extraordinarily flourishing during the period of the rise of Islam and of the Crusades. To these belong the apocalypses in Arabic, Ethiopian and perhaps also in Syrian, preserved in the so-called Liber Clementis discipuli S. Petri (Petri apostoli apocalypsis per Clementem), the late Syrian apocalypse of Ezra (Bousset, Antichrist, 45 &c.), the Coptic (14th) vision of Daniel (in the appendix to Woide's edition of the Codex Alexandrinus; Oxford, 1799), the Ethiopian Wisdom of the Sibyl, which is closely related to the Tiburtine Sibyl (see Basset, Apocryphes éthiopiennes, x.); in the last mentioned of these sources long series of Islamic rulers are foretold before the final time of Antichrist. Jewish apocalypse also awakes to fresh developments in the Mahommedan period, and shows a close relationship with the Christian Antichrist literature. One of the most interesting apocalypses is the Jewish History of Daniel, handed down in Persian.[12]

This whole type of prophecy reached the West above all through the Pseudo-Methodius, which was soon translated into Latin. Especially influential, too, in this respect was the letter which the monk Adso in 954 wrote to Queen Gerberga, De ortu et tempore Antichristi. The old Tiburtine Sibylla went through edition after edition, in each case being altered so as to apply to the government of the monarch who happened to be ruling at the time. Then in the West the period arrived in which eschatology, and above all the expectation of the coming of Antichrist, exercised a great influence on the world's history. This period, as is well known, was inaugurated, at the end of the 12th century, by the apocalyptic writings of the abbot Joachim of Floris. Soon the word Antichrist re-echoed from all sides in the embittered controversies of the West. The pope bestowed this title upon the emperor, the emperor upon the pope, the Guelphs on the Ghibellines and the Ghibellines on the Guelphs. In the contests between the rival powers and courts of the period, the prophecy of Antichrist played a political part. It gave motives to art, to lyrical, epic and dramatic poetry.[13] Among the visionary Franciscans, enthusiastic adherents of Joachim's prophecies, arose above all the conviction that the pope was Antichrist, or at least his precursor. From the Franciscans, influenced by Abbot Joachim, the lines of connexion are clearly traceable with Milič of Kremsier (Libellus de Antichristo) and Matthias of Janow. For Wycliffe and his adherent John Purvey (probably the author of the Commentarius in Apocalypsin ante centum annos editus, edited in 1528 by Luther), as on the other

hand for Hus, the conviction that the papacy is essentially Antichrist is absolute. Finally, if Luther advanced in his contest with the papacy with greater and greater energy, he did so because he was borne on by the conviction that the pope in Rome was Antichrist. And if in the Augustana. the expression of this conviction was suppressed for political reasons, in the Articles of Schmalkalden, drawn up by him, Luther propounded it in the most uncompromising fashion. This sentence was for him an *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*. To write the history of the idea of Antichrist in the last centuries of the middle ages, would be almost to write that of the middle ages themselves.

Authorities.—See, for the progress of the idea in Jewish and New Testament times, the modern commentaries on Revelation and the 2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians; Bousset, *Antichrist* (1895), and the article “Antichrist” in the *Encyclop. Biblica*; R. H. Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, Introduction, li.-lxxiii. For the history of the legend of Nero, see J. Geffcken, *Nachrichten der Göttinger Gesellschaft der Wissenschaft* (1899), p. 446 &c.; Th. Zahn, *Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben* (1886), p. 337 &c.; Bousset, *Kritisch-exegetisches Kommentar zur Offenbarung Johannis*, cap. 17, and the article “Sibyllen” in Herzog-Hauck, *Realencyklopädie für Theologie und Kirche* (3rd ed.), xviii. 265 &c.; Nordmeyer, *Der Tod Neros in der Legende*, a Festschrift of the Gymnasium of Moos. For the later history of the legend, see Bousset, *Antichrist*, where will be found a more detailed discussion of nearly all the sources named; Bousset, “Beiträge zur Geschichte der Eschatologie,” in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, xx. 2, and especially xx. 3, on the later Byzantine prophecies; Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina*, i. (Moscow, 1893), which gives the texts of a series of Byzantine prophecies; E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen* (1898), containing (1) Pseudo-Methodius, Latin text, (2) *Epistola Adsonis*, (3) the Tiburtine Sibylla; V. Istrin, *The Apocalypse of Methodius of Patara and the Apocryphal Visions of Daniel in Byzantine and Slavo-Russian Literature*, Russian (Moscow, 1897); J. Kampers, *Die deutsche Kaiseridee in Prophetie und Sage* (Munich, 1896), and “Alexander der Grosse und die Idee des Weltimperiums,” in H. Grauert’s *Studien und Darstellungen aus dem Gebiet der Geschichte*, vol. i. 2-3 (Freiburg, 1901); E. Wadstein, *Die eschatologische Ideengruppe, Antichrist, Weltsabbat, Weltende und Welgericht* (Leipzig, 1896), which contains excellent material for the history of the idea in the West during the middle ages; W. Meyer, “*Ludus de Antichristo*,” in *Sitzbericht der Münchener Akad.* (Phil. hist. Klasse 1882, H. i.); Kropatschek, *Das Schriftprincip der lutherischen Kirche*, i. 247 &c. (Leipzig, 1904); H. Preuss, *Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist im späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther u. i. d. Konfessionellen Polemik* (Leipzig, 1906). (W. Bo.)

See further, Bousset, *Religion des Judentums*, ed. ii. pp. 289 &c., 381 &c., 585 &c.

See Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* (1893).

It is, of course, uncertain whether this phenomenon already occurs in 2 Cor. vi. 15, since here Belial might still be Satan; cf. however, *Ascensio Jesaiae* iv. 2 &c.; *Sibyll.* iii. 63 &c., ii. 167 &c.

It is not necessary to decide whether the epistle is by St Paul or by a pupil of Paul, although the former seems to the present writer to be by far the more probable, in spite of the brilliant attack on the genuineness of the epistle by Wrede in *Texte und Übersetzungen*, N.F. ix. 2.

Cf. 2 Thess. ii. 8; the Targum also, in its comment on the passage of Isaiah, applies “the wicked” to Antichrist.

See Bousset, *Kommentar zur Offenbarung Johannis*, on these passages.

Ibid. ch. xvii.: and Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, lvii. sq.

Harnack, *Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur*, i. 573

See Bousset, in Herzog-Hauck, *Realencyklop. für Theologie und Kirsche* (ed. 3), xviii. 273 &c.

Latin text by Sackur, cf. *op. cit.* 1 &c.; Greek text by V. Istrin.

See Bousset, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, xx. p. 289 &c.
Published in Merx, *Archiv zur Erforschung des Alten Testament*.
See especially the *Ludus de Antichristo*, ed. W. Meyer.