

Amillennialism — Antichrist

"It is my contention that Christ's church will face two significant threats associated with the Antichrist. The first of these threats is internal—a series of antichrists who arise within the church and are tied to a particular heresy, the denial that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. This internal threat has been present since the days of the apostles in the form of various heresies and will be present until the time of the end when Jesus Christ returns. The second threat is external—the repeated manifestation of the mysterious beast throughout the course of history (as depicted in the book of Revelation), taking the form of state-sponsored heresy and the persecution of Christ's church and the people of God. In the New Testament era, the beast was the Roman Empire and its imperial cult, which demanded the worship of the state and its leader. The Roman Empire, in turn, became the epitome of all those empires that arose and will arise throughout the course of history seeking divine rights, privileges, and prerogatives that belong only to God. It is also my contention that these two distinct threats merge into a single threat at the time of the end, taking the form of an end-times Antichrist who is revealed immediately before the return of our Lord only to be destroyed by Jesus Christ at his second advent. The Antichrist's appearance is tied to some form of state-sponsored heresy much like that of the emperor cult of ancient Rome, wherein the Roman emperor viewed himself as a deity and used the full military and economic might of the state in an attempt to impose his will—that the emperor be worshiped as a deity—on the people of God. If there are two threats to God's people (internal and external), there are three distinct lines of evidence found in the New Testament regarding the doctrine of the Antichrist. These are the antichrists of John's Epistles, Paul's "man of sin" in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, and the beast and false prophet of the book of Revelation (especially Rev. 13). Many Christians assume that these three lines of evidence refer to the same thing—an end-times Antichrist. But this connection needs to be established, not just assumed."

— Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2013), 146.

"Although the Antichrist's power is economic and military, it is ultimately given him by the dragon, who is Satan (Rev. 13:2). The Antichrist will be a persecutor on the order of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, or the Roman emperor Domitian and will commit acts of blasphemy that make the desecrations and blasphemies of historical figures such as Antiochus IV, Titus, and Nero pale by comparison. Therefore, these figures from redemptive history should serve to prepare us to face the future. God destroyed them all and delivered his people from their clutches, just as he will destroy the Antichrist and deliver his church when conditions become most desperate."

— Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2013), 148.

"While the end-times Antichrist has not yet come (or has not yet been revealed), many antichrists have already made their appearance."

— Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2013), 149.

"According to Paul (2 Thess. 2:1-12), the day of the Lord had not already come (as some in the Thessalonian church had feared), because two specific events had not yet occurred: a great apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin. Even though Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians before AD 70 (about AD 50/51), he was probably not referring to the events of AD 70 but to the time of the end."

— Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2013), 150.

"Many antichrists will come and go, but, in my opinion, the series of antichrists faced by the church from the beginning will at some point give way to the Antichrist—the final heretic, arch-blasphemer, and persecutor of God's people."

— Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2013), 154.