

## **The Early Church believed that Roman Empire was to be “taken out of the way” Ushering in the Anti-Christ and It’s government**

### **II Thessalonians 2:**

**1** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, **2** That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. **3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; **4** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. **5** Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? **6** And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. **7** For the **mystery of iniquity** doth already work: **only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.** **8** And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: **9** Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, **10** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **11** And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: **12** That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

### **St. Justin Martyr (c. 100-165)**

DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHO

CHAPTER XXXII -- TRYPHO OBJECTING THAT CHRIST IS DESCRIBED AS GLORIOUS BY DANIEL, JUSTIN DISTINGUISHES TWO ADVENTS.

... and he whom Daniel foretells would have dominion for a time, and times, and an half, is even already at the door, about to speak blasphemous and daring things against the Most High. ...

**Source:** Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1

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### **St. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130-202)**

Adversus haereses (inter A.D. 180/199)

Book V, Chapter 26

**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, ...

**Source:** Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1

Book V, Chapter 30

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. ...

3. It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment 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 Evanthas (EUAN QAS) 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**: ...

**Source.** Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1

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### **Tertullian (2nd-3rd Century)**

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who **now hinders must hinder, until he be taken out of the way.**" What obstacle is there but the **Roman state**, the falling away of which, by being scattered into **ten kingdoms**, shall introduce Antichrist upon (its own ruins)? "And then shall be revealed the wicked one, whom the Lord 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."

**Source.** Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3

CHAP. XXXII.

There is also another and a greater necessity for our offering prayer in behalf of the emperors, nay, for the complete stability of the empire, and for Roman interests in general. For we know that a mighty shock is (43) pending over the whole earth--in fact, the very end of all things threatening dreadful woes--is only retarded by the **continued existence of the Roman empire. We have no desire, then, to be overtaken by these dire events; and in praying that their coming may be delayed, we are lending our aid to Rome's duration.**

Source: Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3

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### **Hippolytus (3rd Century)**

TREATISE ON CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST.

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. ...

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.

**Source** Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5

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### **St. Cyprian of Carthage (3rd Century)**

TREATISE XI.

EXHORTATION TO MARTYRDOM, ADDRESSED TO FORTUNATUS.

PREFACE.

1. You have desired, beloved Fortunatus that, I since the burden of persecutions and afflictions is lying heavy upon us, and in the ending and completion of the world the hateful time of **Antichrist is already beginning to draw near**, I would collect from the sacred Scriptures some exhortations for preparing and strengthening the minds of the brethren, whereby I might animate the soldiers of Christ for the heavenly and spiritual contest.

**Source.** Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5

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### **Lactantius Firminianous (4th Century)**

Divine Institutions (Divinae Institutiones)

Book VII, Chapter 25, OF THE LAST TIMES, AND OF THE CITY OF ROME:

These are the things which are spoken of by the prophets as about to happen hereafter: ... The subject itself declares that the fall and ruin of the world will shortly take place; **except that while the city of Rome remains** it appears that nothing of this kind is to be feared. But when that capital of the world shall have fallen, and shall have begun to be a street, which the Sibyls say shall come to pass, who can doubt that the end has now arrived to the affairs of men and the whole world? It is that city, that only, **which still sustains all things**; and the God of heaven is to be entreated by us and implored -- **if, indeed, His arrangements and decrees can be delayed -- lest, sooner than we think for, that detestable tyrant should come** who will trader-take so great a deed, and dig out that eye, by the destruction of which the world itself is about to fall.

**Source:** Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7

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### **St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-386) Doctor of the Church**

Catechetical Lectures

LECTURE XV.

ON THE CLAUSE, AND SHALL COME IN GLORY TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD; OF WHOSE KINGDOM THERE SHALL BE NO END, DANIEL vii. 9--14.

12. But this aforesaid **Antichrist is to come when the times of the Roman empire shall have been fulfilled**, and the end of the world is now drawing near. There shall rise up together **ten kings of the Romans**, reigning in different parts perhaps, but all about the same time; and after these an **eleventh, the Antichrist**, who by his magical craft shall seize upon the Roman power; and of the kings who reigned before him, three he shall humble, and the remaining seven he shall keep in subjection to himself. At first indeed he will put on a show of mildness (as though he were a learned and discreet person), and of soberness and benevolence: and by the lying [108] signs and wonders of his magical deceit a having beguiled the Jews, as though he were the expected Christ, he shall afterwards be characterized by all kinds of crimes of inhumanity and lawlessness, so as to outdo all unrighteous and ungodly men who have gone before him displaying against all men, but especially against us Christians, a spirit murderous and most cruel, merciless and crafty. And after perpetrating such things for three years and six months only, he shall be destroyed by the glorious second advent from heaven of the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus, the true Christ, who shall slay Antichrist with the breath of His mouth, and shall deliver him over to the fire of hell.

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7

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### **St. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) Doctor of the Church**

Homilies on Second Thessalonians

HOMILY IV. 2 THESSALONIANS ii. 6--9.

"And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming: even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan."

ONE may naturally enquire, what is that which withholdeth, and after that would know, why Paul expresses it so obscurely. **What then is it that withholdeth, that is, hindereth him from being revealed?** Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but **others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly**, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought now to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased. **But because he said this of the Roman empire, he naturally glanced at it, and speaks covertly and darkly.** For he did not wish to bring upon himself superfluous enmities, and useless dangers. ... And he did not say that it will be quickly, although he is always saying it--but what? "that he may be revealed in his own season," he says, "For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work." He speaks here of Nero, as if he were the type of Antichrist. For he too wished to be thought a god. And he has well said, "the mystery"; that is, it worketh not openly, as the other, nor without shame. For if there was found a man before that time, he means, who was not much behind Antichrist in wickedness, what wonder, if there shall now be one? But he did not also wish to point him out plainly: and this not from cowardice, but instructing us not to bring upon ourselves unnecessary enmities, when there is nothing to call for it. So indeed he also says here. **"Only there is one that restraineth now, until**

**he be taken out of the way," that is, when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come.** And naturally. For as long as the fear of this empire lasts, no one will willingly exit himself, but when that is dissolved, he will attack the anarchy, and endeavor to seize upon the government both of man and of God. For as the kingdoms before this were destroyed, for example, that of the Medes by the Babylonians, that of the Babylonians by the Persians, that of the Persians by the Macedonians, that of the Macedonians by the Romans: so will this also be by the Antichrist, and he by Christ, and it will no longer withhold. And these things Daniel delivered to us with great clearness.

"And then," he says, "shall be revealed the lawless one." And what after this? The consolation is at hand. "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming, even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan."

Source: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 13

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**St. Jerome** (c. 340-420) Doctor of the Church  
Commentary on Daniel, Chapter 7, Verse 8:

"... 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, ...**"

Source: St. Jerome, Commentary on Daniel (1958). pp. 15-157

Letter CXXIII  
TO AGERUCHIA (409 A.D.)

16. But what am I doing? Whilst I talk about the cargo, the vessel itself founders. **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." ...

17. ... For thirty years the **barbarians burst the barrier of the Danube and fought in the heart of the Roman Empire.** Long use dried our tears. For all but a few old people had been born either in captivity or during a blockade, and consequently they did not miss a liberty which they had never known. Yet who will hereafter credit the fact or what histories will seriously discuss it, **that Rome has to fight within her own borders not for glory but for bare life; ...**

Source: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 6

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[St. Augustine of Hippo](#) (345 - 430) Doctor of the Church  
City of God, Book XX, Chapter 19

For what does he [Paul] mean by "**For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way: and then shall the wicked be revealed?**" [2 Thess 2] I frankly confess I do not know what he means. ... However, it is not absurd to believe that these words of the apostle, "Only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way," **refer to the Roman empire**, as if it were said, "Only he who now reigneth, let him reign until he be taken out of the way." "**And then shall the wicked be revealed:**" **no one doubts that this means Antichrist.**

Source: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 2