

Spinning the Wheel of Speculation: Another Year of Playing Name the Antichrist

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As 2026 kicks in, it's time for a brand-new round of Antichrist predictions to begin. Just like contestants on a game show, the prophecy pundits line up in a row. Each one gives the *Wheel of Speculation* a spin and hopes to walk away with the win. Meanwhile, the wheels of history keep spinning as well. Yesterday's Antichrist exits the stage, as a new one is identified – as the next big Biblical bad guy of our age.

Cueing up an old episode from the pop-prophecy reruns back in 2013, *the survey said...* one in four Americans thought Barack Obama could be the Antichrist.¹ At first, this answer lit up the board.² But the buzzer sounded, and no points were scored.³

Ten years later in 2023, a Brazilian prophet known as the “Living Nostradamus” proved he *wants to be a visionary* by giving “King Charles III” as his *final answer* on the Antichrist question. With no lifelines remaining, the “Living Nostradamus” walked away without the jackpot. Obama was out, and King Charles was in, but neither answer clinched the win.

Two confident guesses down, and no contender has claimed the crown. Who will the next contestant be to *come on down*? As it turns out, there's no need to wait to tune in to the pop-prophecy show. On New Year's Eve of 2025, the next guest was ready to go.

Pop-Prophecy Weighs In as the New Year Begins

¹ One in four Americans think Obama may be the antichrist, survey says | US news | The Guardian <https://bit.ly/3YVJULE>

² Apparently, John McCain was ahead of the game. According to The Oklahoman (August 8, 2008): “Another recent McCain political ad dubbed ‘The One’ is causing furor because some political commentators have suggested that it likens Obama to the ***antichrist**, particularly to the antichrist character (Nicolae Carpathia) depicted in the best-selling ‘Left Behind’ bible prophecy series (Antichrist vying for the U.S. presidency? <https://bit.ly/4jstTW6>).

³ As late as 2017, Obama will still the leading candidate for the Antichrist position. But Trump had already begun to close in, followed closely by Vladimir Putin (Obama, Trump, or Putin: Will the real antichrist please stand up? | AP News <https://bit.ly/3LcZD5Y>).

This year's first hopeful to give *prophecy jeopardy* a try is Nathan Leal of Watchman's Cry.⁴ Fast on his feet and not missing a beat, Neal wants all to see who's *behind door number three*. And it's none other than Danald J. Trump himself, as Leal's top pick for Antichrist 2026.⁵ According to Leal:

"...the Church has been blindsided. It's getting sucker punched and it is not ready for what is taking place right now. It is not being vigilant against the antichrist, against the little horn who is alive and well right now. He's here, folks. We're in the tribulation and the little horn son of perdition is also here. His job is to break the whole earth into pieces to break a lot of things....He's here to break the truth and cast it to the ground because that is what his appointment is about. His name is Donald Trump. He's the little horn. We have seen the proof over and over and over. If you look around and look at the news and we pay attention to what he's doing, folks, he's fulfilling the Bible. He is fulfilling the prophecies in the book of Daniel about the little horn. It's so easy to see."⁶

If the Church has been truly "blindsided" by anything, it's been by the failed predictions of the pop-prophecy kings – decade after decade, year after year, generation after generation. From Hal Lindsey to Edgar Whisenant, from Harold Camping to Jack Van Impe, none of their predictions ever come true. If God's people are truly "getting sucker punched," it's by their charlatan leaders who are eating their lunch.

But the failed-prophecy predictions are merely the byproduct of the failure to understand Bible prophecy to begin with. The above quotation is a good example of the situation that breeds this reckless speculation. Leal identifies Trump as the antichrist, whom he identifies as the "little horn" in the book of Daniel, and says it's "so easy to see." Granted, it is in fact "easy to see" who Daniel's "little horn" is, but it's not Donald Trump, nor is it the Antichrist.

Misunderstanding Daniel

Daniel's "little horn" comes out of "the male goat" that "magnified itself exceedingly" (Dan. 8:9), and Daniel tells us that "the goat represents the kingdom of Greece" (Dan. 8:21). The

⁴ Watchman's Cry <https://bit.ly/49kn5pY>

⁵ Trump Is The Antichrist - The Church is not Ready! – YouTube <https://bit.ly/4pmQZzM>

⁶ Trump Is The Antichrist, 3:44-6:8

little horn grows up to the stars of heaven, throws some of them down to the earth, and tramples them (Dan. 8:10). This refers to the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes⁷ who “removed the regular sacrifice” (Dan. 8:11) for “2300 evenings and mornings”⁸ until “the holy place” was “properly restored” (Dan. 8:14) by Judas Maccabeus.⁹ As James Jordan points out, Antiochus, “took over the Temple and trampled down the saints” who are represented by the stars of heaven.¹⁰

So, Donald Trump is not the Little Horn, and the Little Horn is not the Antichrist. Leal appeals to Daniel 8 to try and pin the tail on the Antichrist,¹¹ but Daniel 8 is about Antiochus Epiphanes and mentions nothing about an Antichrist. As Ken Gentry points out, the term *Antichrist* “appears only four times in all of Scripture: in 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 7.”¹² John’s context is unrelated to Daniel’s context, and Daniel and John both have their own context.

As much as Donald Trump would probably love to see that he was identified in the big beautiful book, and probably has people looking into that right now, he’s simply not mentioned. Not even once. Believe me. Very sad.

Even more sad is Leal’s methodology, which is typical of the hopscotch hermeneutic and zigzag exegesis of pop-prophecy in general. The prophecy pundits take their readers/listeners on a wild ride all through the Bible, stringing unconnected passages together in a maddening frenzy. When all is said and done, their audience is left dizzy. Like a magician throwing jumbled props into a hat, they shake it up and out comes Donald Trump! This is what passes for theology...in the world of pop-prophecy.

Misunderstanding Paul

⁷ See: Hank Hanegraaff, Did Daniel Prophecy a Seven-Year Great Tribulation? | Christian Research Institute <https://bit.ly/497nXiR>

⁸ See: Michael Segal, “For 2300 Evenings and Mornings (Dan 8:14): Recalculating the Cessation of the Daily Offering” (*Journal for the Study of Judaism* 53 [2022], 1–18).

⁹ See: Robert E. Cruickshank, Jr., Zechariah 12 and the Victories of the Maccabees | It's about time <https://bit.ly/4jmavLi>; Zechariah 13: From the Resistance to the Remnant - The Burros of Berea <https://bit.ly/4qAwn8b>

¹⁰ James B. Jordan, *The Handwriting on the Wall: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision Press, [2007] 2010), 426–427. Jordan also sees the imagery extending to the Herods, who ultimately “took over the Temple and its services” after all was said and done (427).

¹¹ See: Gary DeMar, Pinning the Tail on the Antichrists! - The American Vision <https://bit.ly/4qBla7e>

¹² Kenneth L. Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 3rd ed. revised and expanded (Chesnee, SC: Victorious Hope Publishing, 2021), 377.

In his amalgamation of mismatched texts, Leal's sleight of hand even sneaks in Paul's Man of Sin, aka, "the son of perdition" from 2 Thessalonians 2. Apparently, even the Apostle Paul suffered from Trump Derangement Syndrome – writing about him nearly 2000 years ago.

So, Leal seems to think he's solved history's greatest *Final Jeopardy* clue. If he were on Jeopardy, however, Alex Trebek would have raised his eyebrow and said, "I'm sorry, that is not correct. The correct response is: 'Who are the first-century Zealots?'" As I've shown elsewhere, the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians 2 had to do with the Zealot movement becoming unhinged once the restraining forces were removed, allowing the Jewish Rebellion to begin.¹³ Their motto was MJGA (make Jerusalem great again), not MAGA.

2 Thessalonians 2 simply has nothing to do with President Trump.

Misunderstanding Jeremiah

To add chaos to confusion, Leal throws the prophet Jeremiah into the mix and pulls Kristi Noem out of his bag of tricks – supposedly proving further that Trump is the Antichrist:

"Jeremiah 50 verse 16 it says that they, the residents of Babylon, will flee to their own country, to their own land. They will flee. They will leave. Why will they flee their own land? Because Kristi Noem has put commercials on TV saying, 'Get out of here. We don't like you'...Now, ladies and gentlemen, these are examples that they are beyond denial. They prove who he is. And they prove that every one of you guys listening need to make sure that you are ready, that you're prepared, that you are watching, and that your hearts are right with God."¹⁴

Needless to say, and rather obvious, Jeremiah wasn't prophesying about a commercial produced by Kristi Noem 2600 years down the road. Jeremiah was prophesying about the downfall of the Babylon of his own day, as the "once dominant power in the ancient Near East" fell decisively to the "Persians under the leadership of Cyrus the Great" in 539 BC.¹⁵

In context, the Lord tells Jeremiah that He is going to arouse a great horde of nations against Babylon, "from the land of the north" (Jer. 50:9b). Accordingly, and true to

¹³ See: Robert E. Cruickshank, Jr., Unraveling the Mystery of the Lawless One (Part One) - The Burros of Berea <https://bit.ly/4joyutt> ; Unraveling the Mystery of the Lawless One (Part Two) | It's about time <https://bit.ly/4smHhQA>

¹⁴ Trump Is The Antichrist - The Church is not Ready! – YouTube <https://bit.ly/4pmQZzM> , 41:02 – 41:38.

¹⁵ How does Jeremiah 50 align with recorded history of Babylon's overthrow | Bible Hub <https://bit.ly/45BruU6>

Jeremiah's prophecy, archaeological and extra-biblical sources (like the Cyrus Cylinder) confirm the involvement of a confederation of nations under Cyrus's command.¹⁶

Jeremiah's description of this formidable force coming from the north "correlates well with how the Medes and Persians approached Babylon from regions lying to the northeast of Mesopotamia. While Babylon itself sat in Mesopotamia, the Medes were primarily located in the Zagros Mountains (on the modern map, roughly north to northeast of Babylon), and the Persian core territories were further east. Their coalition campaign from that direction matches Jeremiah's remark about an attack coming from the north."¹⁷

Jeremiah notes that Babylon would be attacked with the arrows of expert warriors (Jer. 50:9b), and the Persians were in fact renowned for their archery skills. When God says, "Cut off the sower from Babylon and the one who wields the sickle" (Jer. 50:16a), he is addressing "the Medes and the Persians, and bids them to cut off from Babylon both the sowers and the reapers," as Calvin says.¹⁸

When Jeremiah says, "They will each turn back to his own people, and they will each flee to his own land" (Jer. 50:16c), he's not writing a script for a Trump Whitehouse political ad. He is writing a script for the returning exiles after the captivity is over. Jeremiah said that Israel "is a scattered people," first by Assyria and second by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (Jer. 50:17). But the Lord would punish Babylon, just as He punished Assyria, and bring His people back to their own land (Jer. 50:18). This happened by the decree of Cyrus, who brought "all Israel" back to "their own cities" in their own land (Ezra 2:70; cf. 3:1; Neh. 7:73).

In short, Jeremiah 50 prophesies the fall of ancient Babylon, not modern-day TV commercials. 2 Thessalonians 2 addresses the problem of the first-century Zealot movement, not twenty-first century politics. And Daniel 8 is about Antiochus Epiphanes, not Donald J. Trump.

Flipping the Calendar Forward

But as each page of the calendar flips in 2026, the prophecy pundits will be back at the wheel – spinning their spiel. As the weeks and months go by, their bold guesses about who the Antichrist might be will surely be entertaining to watch and fun to hear. But history and Scripture will sit quietly by, unshaken by the fanfare. And history and Scripture are exactly what believers need to know if we're going to be unshaken by prophecy pundits' failures.

¹⁶ How does Jeremiah 50 align with recorded history of Babylon's overthrow | Bible Hub <https://bit.ly/45BruU6>

¹⁷ How does Jeremiah 50 align with recorded history of Babylon's overthrow | Bible Hub <https://bit.ly/45BruU6>

¹⁸ Jeremiah 50 Calvin's Commentaries <https://bit.ly/49EnGnx>

Because if this latest video by Nathan Leal is any indication, there's going to be another year's worth of new prophetic speculation – when the calendar flips to 2027.

For now, we'll sit back and wait to see who the next contestant on the pop-prophecy game show will be...and who they think the Antichrist will be.

Or, maybe the prophecy pundits will wake up and finally handle the Scriptures responsibly. Doubtful, but we'll see. Either way, let's make sure that we do!

And now? Now I feel like watching a gameshow.