

ANTICHRIST

One of the major events to occur just before the return of Christ as Conquering King is the appearance of an individual called the Antichrist.

Because the Antichrist will play an extremely important role in the end time events and will have a negative impact the lives of almost everyone on earth, it extremely important for anyone who is serious about their physical and spiritual well-being to be able to recognize this individual in order to survive this period of time.

Do you know who or what the biblical Antichrist is and how to absolutely recognize this threat to your physical and spiritual well-being? If not, you need to pay careful attention to the information contained in this broadcast because your physical and spiritual survival could well depend upon your perception and conduct concerning the Antichrist's arrival and rule on earth.

Most people who have studied the personality and deeds of this individual have, for the most part, totally misunderstood the essential factors associated with this person.

Many view the Antichrist as an individual that will be easily recognized as evil and sinister. The reality is that, the Antichrist and his religious system of government will look like the greatest and most wonderful religious, political, and economic system that the world has ever seen. The leader of this alliance of nations will appear as a dynamic and charismatic individual who will lead his alliance of nations and the world into a time of unparalleled peace and prosperity for a short time.

A Great Deception

Jesus said that the deception surrounding the Antichrist will be so clever, that only the elect of God will recognize him and understand his true intent and purpose: Notice what Jesus said about those who will not be able to recognize the Antichrist:

"And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, seeing the beast, that it was a thing, and is not and yet now is" (Rev.17:8 Para.). See also Dan.12:9-10; Rev.1:1-8.

Everyone, except the true servants of the Sovereign God will be deceived into thinking that this person is indeed a savior of humanity. Therefore, it is extremely important to be able to recognize some of the characteristics and powers that this person may exhibit as he imposes his will on the world.

One must realize that deceived people do not know that they are deceived, and that a person will remain deceived unless they diligently and honestly put forth the effort to search for and accept truth. No person on earth is totally immune to being deceived or causing deception. In fact, the Bible says that the whole world has been deceived except for the elect of God.

The truth is, there is not a person alive who knows every biblical truth in exact detail. Therefore, no one can totally rely upon another person for their understanding of God's truth. This is why the Bible instructs you to study to show yourself approved before God and to work out your own salvation in fear and trembling. See 2.Tim.2:14-16; Eph.2:12-13.

Who is the Antichrist?

First, let us remove some of the mystique about the name Antichrist. Simply put the Antichrist is an individual who is against the true Christ and/or is attempting to pass himself off as the true Christ. In either case, this individual is in opposition to God the Father and Jesus Christ and their teachings.

The Antichrist is the same dynamic and charismatic individual described elsewhere in the Bible as the Beast, who is the leader of a powerful religious governmental system that controls an alliance of nations called the Beast. The Antichrist is the individual who has absolute authority, power, and control over all religious, philosophical, economic, and political aspects of people who live under his control.

In Revelation chapter 13 verse 1 through 4 John relates the following about the beast that he sees emerge out of the sea:

"And I stood on the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of its heads as if it had been wounded to death; and its fatal wound was healed. And the earth admired the beast. And worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast, saying, Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with it?" (Rev.13:3-4 Para.).

Horns and crowns are symbolic of authority and rulership and water is symbolic of vast numbers people, so it would seem that this Beast rises out of the nations of this world, which have various national abilities and military power.

It is extremely important to understand that this individual called the Antichrist and the Beast is not Satan the Devil, but is in Satan's service and is a representative of Satan's demonic spiritual government as is the False Prophet (Rev.16:13; 20:10). The Bible clearly states that Satan the Devil is a master at the art of deception: "He is that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). He has been a liar from the very beginning (Jn.8:44). The Antichrist is one of his most clever deceptions of all time, which will deceive all but the elect of God.

Signs and Miracles

The Antichrist, who is the leader of the alliance of nations called the Beast, will ascend to power by supernatural signs and miracles and will be accepted as a god in the flesh by most people. Notice what Jesus says about the false christs and prophets who will precede his arrival as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Matthew 24:23-31 Paraphrased

Jesus Said, "Then if anyone says to you, Behold, here is the Christ; or, Here he is! Do not believe it. For false christs will rise up, and false prophets. And they will give great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. Then if they say to you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; do not go out. Behold, he is in the inner rooms; do not believe" (vs.23-26). See also Mk.13:21-22.

Throughout the centuries, many false Messiahs and false prophets have come and gone. During the time of trouble, at the end of the age, religious deception will be so intense that the only ones who will not be deceived are the elect of God who diligently follow the true God. In the following scriptures Jesus describes the major events that will accompany his arrival on earth.

Jesus says that his return will not be a silent or inconspicuous occurrence; it will be as lightning, which is always accompanied by a loud thunderous noise. Jesus said:

"For as lighting comes out of the east and shines as far as the west so also will be the coming of the Son of man" (v27).

Jesus also describes the cataclysmic celestial events that will take place before to his return and the gathering of God's elect people. Jesus Said:

"And immediately after the affliction of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in the heavens. And then all the tribes of the land will wail. And they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory. And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds; from one end of the heavens to the other" (vs.29-31).

The signs that precede Christ's return are awesome events that will occur in the heavens. The sun will become dark (Mk.13:24-26), the moon will not reflect sunlight to the earth, and the stars (Greek

'aster') will be moved out of their orbits. These signs will be apparent to everyone on earth. When Jesus returns in all his glory and power, his very presence will disrupt the physical universe. See Ex.19:16-18; 24:17; Isa.13:9-13; 24:1-5; Joel 2:10-12, 30; Hag.2:6-7.

Every person alive on earth at the time of Christ's return will be aware of these events that will occur in the heavens. Most people will be terrified and fear for their lives. Some will be terrified because they know that Christ is returning to destroy them, and others will be in fear because they think that the world is coming to an end.

The magnitude of the events that will accompany Christ's return will be far from secret or silent; they will be terrifying! All of the scriptures that speak of the appearance of the Beast leader and his Beast alliance of nations tell us that he will arrive before the events that precede Christ's coming. He will be alive as Christ pours destruction upon the earth and its inhabitants for their great wickedness and rebellion against him and his holy Father.

The apostles John, Paul, and Peter warned of teachers and prophets who would come teaching heresies and they foretold that many people would follow these people and their lies.

At the time John, Paul, and Peter were inspired to write their letters, most of God's elect thought that the return of Christ was imminent. Because this was not the case, the things these apostles said concerning people and conditions that would exist just before the return of Christ were mostly prophetic.

At the close of the first age of the church and before he was shown the things that pertained to the end of the age, the apostle John spoke about those who opposed Christ and what he taught about his relationship to God the Father and the elect children of God. As we review what John says about the Antichrist, notice that he says the Spirit of God residing within the children of God will separate a child of God from the world, make a child of God sinless, and reveal those who oppose and reject The Sovereign Father and his son the Messiah. The

apostle John said:

"Young ones, it is the last time: and as you have heard that the Antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but were not a part of us, if they had been one of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that it should be known that they were not a part of us. And you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I did not write to you because you did not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth" (1.Jn.2:18-21 Para.).

John speaks of a prophecy that those to whom he was writing already knew about. He tells the elect of God that the fulfillment of this prophecy was already in progress. He goes on to say that those who were against Christ at that time were never true sons of God, and that, by leaving the true body of Christ, they had revealed their true nature and purpose.

John also confirms that those who have the Spirit of God have the knowledge and ability to discern truth from error in spiritual matters, and that those who are liars and deceivers will be known by those who have the Spirit of God within them. This is because the Spirit of God reveals truth. See Jn.14:17, 15:26, 16:12-13; 1.Cor.2:12-13.

Because the Spirit of God reveals truth, it is extremely important that each child of God during the end of this age listen very carefully to what the spirit says concerning the Antichrist and his religion and governmental system.

Who is a Liar?

Those who oppose Christ, do not teach the truth concerning Jesus as the Creator God and Savior of humanity. These people also deny the individuality of the Father and the Son and they are liars in the eyes of God. John says that the Antichrist will not teach the truth of God, but he will teach a lie. John says:

"Who is the liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the

Christ? He is the antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son. Every one that denies the Son does not have the Father. The one who confesses the Son, truly has the Father also" (1.Jn.2:22-23 Para.).

The truly converted of the first age of the church understood exactly what John was saying concerning the Father, Christ, and the Spirit of God, because they were taught the mysteries concerning the plan of God by the apostles. However, this knowledge was mostly lost when the early church disappeared shortly after the apostle John's death.

John tells us in 1. Jn. Chapter 3, verses 9 and 10 that:

"Everyone being begotten of God [the Father] does not sin, because his [the Father's] seed [spirit of God] abides in him, and he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the Devil are revealed: Everyone failing to practice righteousness or love his brother is not of God" (1.Jn.3:9-10 Para.).

It is impossible to understand what John is saying here, unless one understands that the spirit of God within a child of God keeps them in a sinless condition before God the Father. As long as a child of God is seeking to live a righteous life and does not willfully and habitually practice sin, no sin is imputed to him. It is this same spirit of God that reveals to the elect of God who is and who is not of God. One of the major identifying marks of the Antichrist/Beast is that he is a sinner according to the biblical definition of sin; therefore, it is necessary for all who are called of God to fully understand what sin is and is not, so that they will not be deceived by the Antichrist or his state religion, which is led by the False Prophet.

Good and Evil Spirits

In the first three verses of first John, chapter four, John speaks of testing for evil influence and he shows that a major key in this testing process is the understanding that Christ's spirit resides within the children of God:

John says, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world. By this know the spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus has come in the flesh is from God. And every spirit which does not acknowledge that Jesus has come in the flesh is not from God: and this is the antichrist which you heard is coming, and now is already in the world" (1.Jn.4:1-3 Para.). See also 2.Jn.v.7; Matt.24:4-5.

Almost all opposition to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the children of God comes from the evil influence of spirit-beings. Therefore, it is extremely important for God's children to be able to discern the difference between a good and an evil spiritual influence.

John says that a child of God can determine if a spirit (that is, a spirit being or spiritual influence) is from God or not. If a spirit acknowledges that Christ has come in the flesh, it is good. If this acknowledgment is not made, this spirit or spiritual influence is evil and it is in opposition to God the Father and Jesus Christ.

On the surface it seems that the formula John gives to determine the character of a spirit-being or spiritual influence is simple and direct, and it is. However, the key to understanding John's instructions is to understand what he means when he says, "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh."

Most people will admit that the person Jesus lived and was a religious leader. Some will acknowledge that he was a prophet, and some will acknowledge him as the prophetic Savior of humanity. However, very few truly understand or will acknowledge him as the Creator God who became the Savior, died, and was resurrected, and now lives in the flesh of his Father's children.

Another important identifying sign of the Antichrist is that he will not acknowledge that Christ has come in the flesh in the same manner as the scriptures teach.

The apostle Peter said this about false prophets and teachers:

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many [the majority of people] shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evilly spoken of" (2.Pet.2:1-2 KJV).

There are many things that people consider to be truth; however, what God reveals as the way of truth is not what most people believe as truth. It is God's way of truth that most people hate and ridicule. A number of prophecies tell us that the Antichrist will speak blasphemous things against God and his teachings.

The apostle Paul said this about a false gospel being taught during his day:

During the lifetime of the apostle Paul, those who opposed Jesus Christ were preaching another Jesus and another gospel. This same false Jesus and message is still being preached and taught today. The Antichrist as the leader of the Beast alliance of nations will exist just before Christ's return and he will promote himself as a savior of humanity, but he will have his own deceptive good news message for humanity. Paul said:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (vs.13-15 KJV).

Although Paul speaks of those who are counterfeit ministers of Christ, the same basic concepts apply to the Antichrist who is the Beast, and the False Prophet, and those who are in service to them as their representatives.

The Man of Sin

In Chapter 3 of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul gave a prophetic warning of a coming deception which partially applied during his

day and during the end time. Paul said that there would be an evil person who would arrive on the world scene after a great apostasy within the church and that this individual would oppose everything godly, pretend to be the true god and sit in God's temple in order to fool people into believing that he is indeed god.

An interesting thing about this person, is that, Paul calls him the Man of Sin and who is the Son of Perdition. The English word 'perdition' is translated from the Greek word 'apoleia' which, in the context of Paul's warning prophecy, refers to an everlasting state of torment.

The Bible clearly shows that wicked humans will have their life terminated with fire. No human is going to be tormented in the lake of fire forever; therefore, the being who inhabits the physical body of the Son of Perdition is not human, and if it is not human, it must be a spirit-being that is being spoken of.

In his arrogance, this powerful spirit-being masquerading as a human will desecrate the temple of the true God in Jerusalem by entering into it and sitting there in defiance of the true God in order to prove to the world that he is indeed a god, and that the true God is no god. Paul tells the Thessalonians:

"Do you not remember, that, I told you these things when I was with you? And now you know the thing holding him back from being revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness already works: only he is being held back now, until it comes out of the midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and he will be brought to nothing by the brightness of his [Christ's] coming"" (vs.5-8).

Paul had already talked with them about the Antichrist and told them that this individual was being restrained from coming out of the middle of something. The thing that this individual comes out of, according to visions of Daniel and the apostle John, is the alliance of nations symbolized by the beast that came out of the sea. Therefore, it is very clear that wherever this powerful and fierce beast-like alliance of nations is located in the end of

the age, the Antichrist will be there as its supreme leader.

Christ will remove this lawless individual from power when he comes to rule the earth. This is the same evil spirit mentioned in Daniel 7:11 who will have his physical body destroyed and will, in his spirit form, be cast into a lake of fire.

Notice Paul's final warning concerning this evil person:

"His [the Antichrist's] coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and miracles and lying wonders, And all deceit of unrighteousness of those being lost; because they did not receive the love of the truth in order for them to be saved. And because of this God will send to them, a working of error, for them to believe a lie" (vs.9-11).

Based on God's word, those whom God has called to salvation should know the difference between good and evil; however, many have already been deceived by a false Christianity and many will be deceived by Satan's Antichrist and his religious and political system of government.

Paul gives a dire warning not to allow one's love for the truth of God to erode. Make no mistake, the message of the Antichrist and Satan's religious and political system is not truth, it is great deception designed to destroy one's opportunity to enter the Family and Kingdom of God. His miracles, signs, and wonders will not be from the Sovereign God; they will be from Satan the Devil and are designed to deceive humanity.

The majority of people will believe the Antichrist's message and his great supernatural works, thinking that they are a part of God's plan for the salvation of humanity; however, just the opposite will be true.

Ten Religious Deceptions

It is highly likely that the Antichrist will come as a savior of humanity and attempt to counterfeit some or all of the things that are prophesied about the coming of the true Messiah. The following is a list of things he may do to attempt to deceive humanity:

1. He may demonstrate that he is the prophetic descendant of King David who is supposed to come to rule the world as described in Psalm 2.
2. He may send a false Elijah to speak of his coming (Mal.4:5, 6).
3. He may appear to gloriously return in the flesh after being fatally wounded (Matt.25:31, 32; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7).
4. He may arrive on earth from space accompanied by other powerful beings (1.Thes.3:13; 2.Thes.1:7).
5. He may attempt to make Jerusalem the capital of his world-ruling government (Isa.11 & 12).
6. He may establish his rule with deceptive miracles and wonders (Psa.69).
7. He may attempt to make an alliance of nations out of the modern ten tribes of Israel and the Jewish nation of Israel (Ezk.37).
8. He may attempt institute his own interpretation of the Mosaic Law (Isa.66: 22,23).
9. He may claim that he has come to bring world prosperity (Isa.11;12).
10. He may proclaim that he has come to bring world peace (Psa.96;98).

All of these are all things that would add validity to his claims in the religious circles of quasi-Christians and Jews. The Antichrist may attempt to counterfeit some or all of the real prophetic signs of the return of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, in order to deceive people and accomplish his goal of world domination for his master Satan the Devil.

Because Satan appears as a glorious righteous angel and his evil servants mimic this same false righteousness (2.Cor.11:14-15), the appearance of the Antichrist will fool those who do not understand the true meaning of the scriptures that speak about the return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Because the central focus of Satan's plan is to deceive people into giving their allegiance and worship to him, his servant the Antichrist will claim to be god in the flesh (2.Thes.2:4). And another other servant of Satan, the False Prophet, will force

those who are under the control of the Beast's alliance of nations to worship the Antichrist/Beast and his image; thereby, they will actually be worshiping Satan the Devil by proxy.

There is little doubt that on the surface Satan's religious and governmental system under the leadership of the Antichrist and the False Prophet will look very good to most people. This is why they will be very unhappy when they see it being destroyed by Jesus Christ (Rev.18:4-20).

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE ANTICHRIST

The following are a number of ways by which anyone who understands the worship system of the true God will be able to identify the Antichrist and his worship system.

Oppressive Rule and Forced Idolatry

Although Jesus Christ and the elect of God will rule from Jerusalem with a rod of iron and exercise judgement upon the rebellious nations of this world (Rev. 12:5), the Kingdom of God will not be cruel or oppressive, nor will Jesus or those who serve him force anyone to worship God by bowing down before an image or representation of himself or God the Father.

God the Father's Worship System

The Bible clearly show that, after Jesus Christ returns, he will establish his Father's true worship system. Conversely, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will oppose any attempt of the Jews or anyone else to worship God as instructed under his covenant with national Israel and the elect of God.

In regard to God the Father's worship system, there are some biblical facts that will help one to understand God's new agreement with national Israel:

The prophecies of Ezekiel and Zechariah clearly show that, during Christ's rule, a temple worship system with a priesthood and animal sacrifices will exist in Jerusalem and will be officiated over by the

male descendants of Zadok who is descended from Eleazar, Aaron's third son. See Ezk.40-46; Zech.14:16-20.

The sacrificial system contained within the agreement with national Israel and the rest of humanity will be performed in a way that is similar to how it was performed under the first agreement with Israel.

The commanded observances and holy convocations of God will be observed by all the people on earth.

The Antichrist will do just the opposite of what the Creator God promises to do when he returns as the Messiah to institute a new agreement with national Israel. The Antichrist will stop the Jews from sacrificing at the temple in Jerusalem and will attempt to change or eliminate the commanded observance and holy convocations of God.

There is a tremendous difference between what the Bible actually says concerning prophetic events, the Sovereign God's worship system, what is required in order to be counted as one having their name written in the book of life, and what is popularly believed and taught by most people today.

The Bible reveals that it is Satan the Devil and his ministers who have counterfeited God's word and message to humanity with a perverted version. Jesus told the aged apostle John:

"That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which is deceiving the whole world".Rev.12:9 Para.

This powerful spirit-being known as the Devil (Satan) and other evil spirits are actively deceiving the entire world politically, philosophically, and religiously.

However, you do not have to be deceived and you will be able to recognize the antichrist if you follow the instructions given in the Bible concerning, who is and who is not God and what is and is not the Sovereign God's worship system and way of life for humanity.

The Bible reveals that there are two distinct paths

that a person can follow during one's life here on earth. Jesus said:

“Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the path that leads to destruction, and many will enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the path that leads to life, and only a few will find it.” Mat.7:13-14

Jesus also said: “Many will say to me in that day (that’s the day of judgment) Lord Lord didn’t we prophesy in your name, and in your name have cast out devils, and in your name done many wonderful works? And then I will say to them, I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness.”

According to Jesus, there is a way that leads to salvation and there is a way that leads to death. And according to Jesus and the apostles there is a gospel that is true and there is a gospel that is a false gospel.

Paul said this to the Galatians in chapter 1, verses 8 to 9, “But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. So then I say to you, if any man preach any other gospel to you than that you have received let him be accursed.”

Is there another gospel? Absolutely there is another gospel and it is being preached to millions today. This is no shallow meaningless threat by the apostle Paul. This curse is backed up by the authority of Jesus Christ whom the apostle Paul served as a minister of the true gospel.

What is recorded here is a historical fact. During the lifetime of the apostles the true gospel was being corrupted by another gospel that was being taught to confuse and seduce the elect of God. And today the world at large is believing this false gospel.

The curse that the apostle Paul pronounced on those who would pervert the true gospel message is still valid today. Therefore, anyone who teaches what they believe to be the good news message that Jesus and the apostles taught, had better make sure that they clearly understand what that gospel message is,

in order to avoid being punished for teaching a false and a counterfeit gospel.

Does it really matter what one believes? Well it really doesn’t matter, if there’s no God. It really doesn’t matter at all. If God the Father and his Son do not exist and the Bible is not the word of God, it does not matter what one believes or how one conducts one's life.

Because most people have been greatly deceived, concerning the Sovereign God's good news message and his worship system, they simply do not believe what Jesus Christ said or what the early church taught concerning the end of the age; therefore, most will readily accept the teachings and rule of the Beast and the False Prophet governmental and religious system that they preside over.

Jesus also said: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he comes shall find watching He will have them sit down and eat as he serves them" (Lk.12:37 Para.).

Active watching involves responsiveness, faithfulness and effort. Why is a true Christian blessed for watching? The reason is that if one actively watches (that is, attends to the business of growing spiritually) that person will be blessed with all of the things that are promised to those who participate in the first resurrection. And that person will not be deceived by the Antichrist or his false prophet.

Although it is extremely important to be able to recognize the Antichrist, and his religious governmental system when they appear on the worlds scene, it is even more important for one to be committed to making the right decisions concerning one's allegiance to God the Father.

I see that my time is up. If you want to know more about Bible prophecy or the other subjects that I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible research .org.

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