

## Articles and Sermons :: The Spirit of Antichrist

### The Spirit of Antichrist - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/4/3 9:57

#### THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." Rev. 13:1

In modern eschatology, this Beast is almost always called "The Antichrist." But the name Antichrist appears five times in the Bible, all in the epistles of John, and in no case does it refer to the Beast of Revelation. From the following passages we will see that Antichrist is not a human being, but a demonic spirit, and a religious, rather than a political entity.

"18; Little children,; it is the last time; and as ye have heard that; antichrist shall come,; even now are there many; antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.; 19; They went out from us,; but they were not of us; for if they had been of us,; they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out,; that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.; 20; But ye have an unction from the Holy One,; and ye know all things.; 21; I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth,; but because ye know it,; and that no lie is of the truth.; 22; Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?; He is; antichrist,; that denieth the Father and the Son." 1 John 2:18-22

"1; Beloved,; believe not every spirit,; but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.; 2; Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; 3; And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist,; whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John 4:1-3

"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." 2 John 7

"These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." 1 John 2:26

The saints had been warned in advance that Antichrist would come (2:18, 4:3). So Antichrist was not always in the world, but came into the world in the first century--perhaps bringing an army of lying spirits with him--as a counterassault against the victory of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God among men. In Greek, the literal meaning of antichrist is not "against Christ" but "instead of Christ." Antichrist is a pseudo-christ spirit whose purpose is to establish a counterfeit Christian system, a grotesque parody starring Satan as God, Antichrist as the head of the body, unclean spirits as the Spirit of holiness, unregenerate religionists as the saints.

The "many antichrists" were false teachers, apostles of Antichrist, who were drawing believers away from the grace of Christ to another gospel (Gal. 1:6). The Gnostics were an amalgam of sects who fused Christianity with neo-platonism and the Mystery Religions. They held that the Word could not have become flesh because matter is evil. Some taught that the "Christ Spirit" temporarily possessed Jesus of Nazareth but evacuated before Golgotha. Others said that Christ wasn't really flesh, just a sort of hologram. Some taught asceticism and self-flagellation, others taught that one could indulge in any sin of the flesh without injuring the sanctity of the spirit, and some even taught that unbridled depravity was a path way to spiritual knowledge.

In those days Antichrist was easy to detect. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist." Over the years Antichrist has become craftier and more subtle. Even today, when the mystery of iniquity (2 Thess. 2:7) appears to be reaching fruition, there are few in the professional clergy who deny the Incarnation, and they are mostly "liberals" preaching to empty sanctuaries and writing books that end up in the dollar bin. Is this the best Antichrist can do in the last days? Has he gotten weak in his old age? Or have we become too sophisticated

ted for him? Regrettably, no. On the contrary, he has become more cunning and difficult to discern.

Note that John does not employ past tense and say that whoever denies that Jesus "came" in the flesh is Antichrist; he says Antichrist denies that Jesus "is come" in the flesh. He denies the ongoing Incarnation of the indwelling Christ. Today, Antichrist affirms that Jesus was the Word-become-flesh and in the same motion denies the Word-become-flesh by denying the Incarnation of Christ in the hearts of men and women who believe in Him. He confesses the historical Christ even while opposing Christ in you.

It is generally agreed that the Scarlet Harlot of Revelation 17 symbolizes the Roman Catholic Church, since she is clearly identified with the city of Rome, the City of Seven Hills (Rev. 17:9 Rev. 17:18) and with the persecution of the saints Rev. 17:6. (T. Austin-Sparks visited St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and sensed a demonic presence of such magnitude that he fled the building. In John's day, Satan's seat was in Pergamos. Rev. 2:13 Could it be that today Antichrist, or even Satan himself, sits enthroned in St. Peter's?) The Roman Church has always affirmed that Jesus was God Incarnate and has probably burned a heretic or two for saying otherwise. But Rome plunged Christendom into gross spiritual darkness for a thousand years. (Think of it! A thousand years!) The sum of the Gospel is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:27 Romanism--orthodox and deadly--confesses Christ and then abstracts the indwelling Christ into the transubstantiation of the Host. Its dogma celebrates the virgin birth while precluding the new birth, "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." 2 Tim. 3:5

"The same miracle that took place in Christ's birth by the Virgin Mary takes place in all of us who are birthed by the Holy Spirit. The Virgin birth was no greater miracle than when you and I were born again by the Spirit. The same Holy Spirit overshadows us, and implants us with the seed of Christ, The Word of God. That new creation is brought into being by the Holy Ghost." (B.H. Clendennen) Every evangelical, fundamentalist and pentecostal understands and believes this, and it is for this reason that our churches have stood as the last bastions of truth in an age of general apostasy. But our ramparts are crumbling. Antichrist has not conquered us--not by a long way--but he has made deep incursions into our territory. The Emerging Church, the Purpose-Driven Church and similar man-centered endeavors are squatters settlements. They are not Antichrist's territory yet, but they are inside our camp and outside biblical authority. They are not demonic, but they are man-centered, and ripening for an Antichrist harvest.

Institutions like the church of Rome and the Trinity Broadcasting Network embody the finished work of Antichrist, since there is nothing resembling the Gospel left in them. Their doctrines are antithetical to the doctrine of Christ and appeal only to the carnal. For the spiritually-minded, a more spiritually-oriented deception is required. It begins with a gospel that is doctrinally orthodox but centered on man rather than Christ. The "many antichrists" among us are not fraudulent priests or farcical faith healers, but pious men with good theology and personal charm. It is dangerous to suppose that sound theology is always attended by heaven's blessings. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14 But he is quite capable of orthodoxy; he simply replaces the indwelling Jesus with a comfortably distant Jesus, and grants Jesus' place of supremacy in the church to something human: himself, or some dogmatic construct, or the church apparatus itself. He doesn't know any better. The ways and values of men are all he knows; the way of the cross is foolishness to him.

Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, &#8237; &#8236;even so must the Son of man be lifted up: &#8237; &#8236;15 &#8237; &#8236;That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, &#8237; &#8236;but have eternal life." John 3:14-15 "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:3 For this reason Paul says, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." 1 Cor. 2:2 "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Col. 1:18 Antichrist is that which occupies the place of pre-eminence "instead of" Christ. When Christ's place is denied Him, it is not left void; it is occupied by something all-too-human--a program, a dogma, a church, a denomination, a man. When that is the case, the church is one step away from being possessed by that which is inhuman, the Spirit of Antichrist.

Last week I attended a discussion group at an Emerging Church that has been conquered by the spirit of Antichrist. The faithful opened with prayer, then casually discussed their depraved lifestyles as if they didn't know what sin was, and in language foul enough to peel wallpaper. Twice I tried speak Gospel and was cut off. I thought of Jesus' words, "Wherever two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst," and realized that we were not gathered in His name at all. I was in the presence of Antichrist. I listened to a few of the pastor's podcasts later. It is standard megachurch fare: Bible guidelines for living a happy life, Christianity minus the cross.

Whether in the form of Gnosticism, Romanism or anthropocentric evangelicalism--or any other ism--the spirit of Antichrist

It masquerades as the Spirit of Christ and, by various paths, leads his victims either to lawlessness or to the weird mixture of legalism and amorality we find in the Catholic Church. And this, I believe, is the mystery of iniquity (NKJV: lawlessness). If so, it is not a misnomer to call the Beast "the Antichrist" after all, since the two are linked in 2 Thess. 2:3-11.

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; 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. 4; Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 5; And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 6; For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 7; 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. 8; 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, that they might be saved. 9; And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

This leaves me wondering what role the church will play in the advent of the Beast. Will he arise from the church itself? Will the visible church be the platform from which he introduces himself to the world? Is this the end to which Antichrist has been laboring all these centuries? A Christian Antichrist?

**Re: The Spirit of Antichrist - posted by Axe1338, on: 2009/4/3 12:27**

Quote:

-----Antichrist is not a human being, but a demonic spirit, and a religious, rather than a political entity.  
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I believe what you wrote was well thought out, but if this is the case then please explain Daniel 11:36-37 and Daniel 8:23-25. Reading this in the Amplified Bible it links these verses in Daniel directly to Revelation 13, showing it is a single person. I am sure you've studied that so I am just curious as to what your response will be.

**Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/4/3 13:48**

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These passages definitely refer to a human being: either Antiochus Epiphanes or the beast of Revelation or both, depending on your eschatology. But there is no textual link to the passages in 1&2 John regarding the spirit of antichrist. The Bible calls the last world ruler the beast, the little horn, the man of sin and a man of fierce features, but nowhere does it call him "the Antichrist." My objective is not to get people to stop calling him the Antichrist, but to point out a depth of meaning in John's teaching about the spirit of antichrist that is often overlooked

**Re: - posted by Axe1338, on: 2009/4/3 15:21**

To my knowledge Antiochus Epiphanes is a type of antichrist. Maybe I didn't understand your post and maybe I still don't, but what I extracted from it was that you were saying that the Antichrist is not a person.

**Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/4/3 16:07**

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The beast of Revelation 13 is a person. I'm saying that when John writes of the spirit of antichrist he is not talking about the "man of sin" who will appear on the world stage at the end of the age. He was talking about something that was already in the world over 1900 years ago. I John 4:3

**Re: The Spirit of Antichrist - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2009/4/3 22:11**

Hi everyone,

Wayneman, about this:

"Note that John does not employ past tense and say that whoever denies that Jesus "came" in the flesh is Antichrist; he says Antichrist denies that Jesus "is come" in the flesh. He denies the ongoing Incarnation of the indwelling Christ. Today, Antichrist affirms that Jesus was the Word-become-flesh and in the same motion denies the Word-become-flesh by denying the Incarnation of Christ in the hearts of men and women who believe in Him. He confesses the historical Christ even while opposing Christ in you."

*...he says Antichrist denies that Jesus "is come" in the flesh. He denies the ongoing Incarnation of the indwelling Christ.*

Where does the text say this?

the entry from Vincent's Word Studies on this part of the passage says:

"That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (&#921;&#788;&#951;&#963;&#959;&#965;&#834;&#957; &#935;&#961;&#953;&#963;&#964;&#959;&#768;&#957; &#949;&#787;&#957; &#963;&#945;&#961;&#954;&#953;&#768; &#949;&#787;&#955;&#951;&#955;&#965;&#952;&#959;&#769;&#964;&#945;)

Lit., Jesus Christ having come, etc. The whole phrase forms the direct object of the verb confesseth."

You go on in this quote to set forth some things predicated on this. What are you basing this upon?

On the way home tonight I saw a man selling a whole bunch of books on the side of a building, one of which asking was the Lord Jesus really God. I have no reason to believe from everything else I saw there to believe that the book was aimed to convince others that He is.

The Lord Jesus said,

"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

- from John 7:16-18(KJV)

**Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/4/3 23:23**

Quote:

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ChrisJD wrote,

*...he says Antichrist denies that Jesus "is come" in the flesh. He denies the ongoing Incarnation of the indwelling Christ.*

Where does the text say this?

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It doesn't. That is part of my explanation of the text. Admittedly my language was careless--thank you for bringing it to my attention--I should have said, "John does not employ the aorist tense, implying a mere historical fact; he employs a second perfect tense (erchomai), implying a present continuance of the fact." The point is that the Son of God not only came in the flesh; he continues to occupy human flesh by indwelling those who believe in him. Gal. 2:20, Col. 1:27 This is what I mean by the ongoing Incarnation. From there I hypothesize that the spirit of antichrist has changed his tactic over the centuries. He may--as in the case of Roman theology--freely confess the Incarnation as a historical fact (Jesus was here), but denies the present indwelling Christ (Jesus is here). You can hold doctrinally correct opinions about the historical Jesus, for all he cares, as long as you don't have a living relationship with the living Jesus.

**Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2009/4/3 23:27**

Wayneman, thank you for the clarification and gracious reply!

I appreciate the suggestions you put forward also.

Chris