

## Articles and Sermons :: The Antichrist by Boris Molchanoff

### The Antichrist by Boris Molchanoff - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/9/13 20:46

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (St. Matthew 16:18). What do the gates of hell signify?

The Jews had the custom of gathering under the leadership of their elders, by the city gates, for the discussion of political, legal and social questions. These meetings were the last appeal of all litigation, and here all divine commandments were announced. They were vested with a definite authority among the people. This Jewish custom of meeting at the city gates is mentioned in the Book of Ruth (IV:1, 11). A description of an active wife in the Book of Proverbs (31: 23) says that, "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." He is invested with the trust of society and takes an active part in important meetings. (Prof. V.V. Bolotoff).

The "gates" of hell signifies not only the forces of hell, but in general staff of Hell's power. Their most important meeting is dedicated to developing a plan for a general battle with the Church. The Church and Hell are represented as two warring powers. And in this war with Hell, according to Christ's words, the Church will remain invincible.

Hell's war plan with the Church is called the "Mystery of Iniquity" in the Holy Scriptures (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The iniquity has been working for centuries and will have its culmination in the appearance of the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The Antichrist can come only as a result of universal Apostasy, that is, the abjuration of the people from God and His paths, when God's grace will withdraw from the people.

"And in the latter times of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." (Daniel 8:23)

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

All of the evil in its fullest strength which human nature can accept and endure will be concentrated in the person of the Antichrist. Thousands of years were required to develop and perfect the kind of human seed that was required to receive the purest most perfect Fruit of the human tree in the person of the Most Blessed Virgin. Comparably, for the appearance of the most depraved fruit, capable of containing within itself all Satanic malice, an entire line of human generations will be demanded in the direction of greatest corruption and defilement of human nature, based upon mad hatred towards Christ and war against His Church. "It can be admitted," says Pro. Belyaev, "that innate and acquired evil, gradually accumulating in a long line of ancestors of the Antichrist, transmitted with each new generation, will reach such a degree of force in the Antichrist himself, which human nature is capable of containing, revealing and enduring. The evil which lives in mankind, will reach the highest limit of its development in him." (Godlessness and The Antichrist, Vol. 1. pp. 193).

Of course, to the degree that evil strengthens in man's will, diabolic activity within man will increase also, as the devil thus receives greater access to man's soul. Inasmuch as the Antichrist's personal evil will and its corruption will reach the limit of its greatest growth, the relationship of the devil to him will reach the limit of maximum nearness, which will be expressed in the devil himself continuously acting in the person of the Antichrist, "God," says St. John of Damascus, "Foreseeing future depravity of his will (the Antichrist's) will allow the devil to inhabit him." ("The Exact Exposition Of The Orthodox Faith", Book IV, Chapter 26) St. Cyril of Jerusalem teaches the same. (Teaching, V. 14). St. Andrew of Kessary says that the Antichrist "will come out of the gloomiest and remotest lands of the earth to which the devil is banished." (Interpretation of the 11th chapter of the Apocalypse, 30th chapter). Blessed Theodore writes, "Man's enemy, clothed in human nature, God's adversary, the demon, usurping God's Name, will appear in the world before Christ's coming." ("An Exact Exposition Of Divine Dogma", chapter 23, printed in "Christian Readings", 1844, Chapter IV, page 355.) Laktancy, Gezihy of Jerusalem and Blessed Heronim, call the Antichrist the son of Satan.

In agreement with such teachings of the Holy Fathers, the life of the Antichrist cannot admit one moment free from satanic action. It must already appear in the very birth and even in his conception, peculiar and exceptional in its depravity. "From a defiled virgin will actually be born his (the devil's) weapon," says St. Ephrem the Syrian. This is also c

confirmed by St. John of Damascus. "A man (the Antichrist) will be born from fornication."

The Holy Fathers Iriney ("Against Heresy", Book V, chapter 30), Ippolit (Legends about Christ and the Antichrist), and also Ilariy, Ambrose, Ieronim and Augustus, remark that the Antichrist will be of Jewish ancestry, from the tribe of Dan.

In the Synaksare, stated in the Week of Lent without meat, we read that, "The Antichrist will come and be born, as St. Ippolit of Rome declares, from a depraved wife and self-styled virgin, which is from the Jews, from the tribe of Dan." (Lenten Triod) Such indications in God's Word have several foundations:

In the prophecies of Patriarch Jacob about each of his sons becoming the progenitors of the tribes of Israel, the fate of Dan's ancestors is depicted in such a way that can only be ascribed to the Antichrist. "Dan shall be a serpent on the way, an adder in the path" (Genesis 49, 17)

In the prophecies of Ieronim: "From Dan himself" (Ieronim VIII, 16)

In the prophecies of the Apocalypse, enumerating the remainder of all the tribes of Israel, marked by the Angel for salvation, the tribe of Dan is absolutely excluded. (Revelations VII, 4-8).

According to the teachings of the Holy Fathers, the devil, exalting the Antichrist, will try to vest his coming with all the signs of the coming of the Son of God to earth. (See St. Cyril of Jerusalem, the 150th catechistic word; St. Ephrem the Syrian, the 39th word, in the Russian translation Blessed Theodore, "A Short Exposition of Divine Dogma", Chapter 23, St. Ippolit, "The Legends of Christ and the Antichrist")

Of course, some resemblance of the Antichrist to Christ will only be external and in essence deceitful, for the whole life and all the deeds of the Antichrist will be an incensed and blasphemous revolt against Christ and His Church. This false external resemblance to Christ will appear in the very birth of the Antichrist. Keeping in mind that Christ was born a Virgin, the devil will produce his weapon from a virgin, not from a pure virgin, however, but from one filled with every vice and satanic filth. Then, as the Lord until he was thirty years old remained in obscurity, so the Antichrist, we assume, will, until the age of 30, remain in clandestine solitude and obscurity. As Christ began His saving service with sermons of His Divine teaching and miracles, so will the Antichrist begin his completely destructive service with the delusion of the people with his false teaching and incredibly shameful, deceitful miracles. As it was pleasing for the Lord to reveal Himself to all the people as the Messiah by solemnly entering Jerusalem and into its Temple, so the Antichrist will reveal himself as the false Jewish Messiah, the international monarch, in his solemn ceremonial entrance into Jerusalem and his enthronement in the temple of Jerusalem, which will by that time be restored.

The Lord's entry into Jerusalem, says Archbishop Innokenty of Herson, was "for all Jews a national declaration that Jesus Christ was veritably the Messiah. Indisputable proof of this are His own words, proclaimed before the gates of Jerusalem, saying: "If thou hadst known, even now, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace: But now they are hid from thine eyes." (Luke XIX, 42.) "With this day, with the rejection of the Messiah, the fate of the Israelite nation was decided for eternity." (The Last Days on Earth of Jesus Christ)

On the day when the Antichrist shall enter into Jerusalem as the false Messiah, forever and irrevocably the fate of his contemporaries will be decided. Blessed are those who, on the last day given by God for the conclusive self-determination of the people, will see the Antichrist as Satan's servant and the inescapable peril of all mankind which recognized him. Finally, as the Lord revealed Himself to the world and fulfilled His service as a Prophet, as King and as High Priest, so will the Antichrist concentrate all this triple power in his hands and complete his destructive service as the teacher of all mankind, as the monarch of an international monarchy and as the highest primate of all religions, demanding reverence for himself as God.

The entire life and activity of the Antichrist may be examined in three periods:

The FIRST PERIOD of the Antichrist from the day of birth to the moment of his social appearance will pass in clandestine obscurity. St. John of Damascus says that, "Antichrist will be raised secretly." (The Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book IV, Chapter 26.)

The SECOND PERIOD of the Antichrist's life will be opened by his thunderous entry (on the world stage "my addition") in the role of a universal teacher or "prophet". It is very possible that he will begin his activity during a world war, when people, enduring all its horrors, will not see any way out of the calamitous dead end. All the concealed levers for the solution will be in the hands of a secret society assisting the Antichrist.

The Antichrist will offer the most successful project for solving the world crisis from the perspective of political and social wisdom, which would establish a uniform political and social order in the whole world. Exhausted from the shock of war, spiritually blinded humanity will not only be unaware that this project is a cowardly trap, enticing it into the most degrading and merciless slavery, but on the contrary, will recognize it as a manifestation of scholarship and genius.

Universal advertisement about the Antichrist as a brilliant thinker, new leader, and savior of mankind, will thunder over all nations in the shortest possible period of time. "Evil spirits dispersed in the universe, will awaken a general, inflated opinion about the Antichrist in man, a general enthusiasm and an irresistible attraction for him." (St. Ephraim the Syrian, 16th word.)

In this period of his activity, the Antichrist will not use any force and will try to win man's trust and affection with his deceitful and hypocritical public mask of virtue. He, according to the expression of Vladimir Soloviev, "will throw a gleaming veil of kindness and truth over the mystery of iniquity." "He will come," said St. Ephrem the Syrian, "in an image which will seduce everyone. He will come as a humble, kind, hater of falsehood (as he will say about himself), rejecting idols, preferring piety and kindness, loving the poor, bearing extremely handsome features, constant, sweet to everyone, respecting especially the Jewish nation because they will be awaiting his coming." He will take sly measures to please everyone, will not accept gifts nor speak in anger, will not show an overcast countenance, but will entice the world with a decorous exterior until he is enthroned. (See previous citation.)

From the great wealth of ascetical experience from our great men of podvig, it is known that when the black devil cannot overcome an ascetic, encountering unswerving opposition from him, a stronger devil comes as an "angel of light" (II Corinthians, XI, 14), attempting to awaken sympathy and trust towards himself in the ascetic, and easily charming him away to destruction. Thus, we can imagine how easily and quickly the bright image of the Antichrist will attract general sympathy towards itself after the filthy devil of Bolshevism.

As a result of such deceit, "the need to invite the Antichrist will arise" within the very temperament of man's spirit. "A beckoning voice will resound in man's society, expressing urgent need for a genius of geniuses, who would raise material development and prosperity to the highest degree and establish affluence on earth." (Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninoff. Vol IV, page 313.)

The hypocrisy of the Antichrist in this period will reach the point that he, even in his relationship to Christians, will not oppose them, but will appear ready to be their benefactor. He will try to imitate Christ in the external, showy side of his life. The majority of Christians, not guided by the spiritual wisdom of the Church, but by worldly wisdom, will not see this deceit, recognizing the Antichrist as Christ who has come to earth a second time. The monks of the Solovetsky monastery pass on the answer given by Righteous Zosima to his disciples when he was asked how the Antichrist could be recognized. Righteous Zosima said, "When you will hear that Christ has appeared on earth, know then that this is the Antichrist." This answer is most precise. "The world or mankind will not recognize the Antichrist, it will recognize him as Christ, it will proclaim him Christ.."