

A silhouette of a figure wearing a crown, set against a dramatic, fiery background of orange and yellow flames. The figure's right arm is raised, with fingers spread. The overall mood is intense and apocalyptic.

Who or What Is the
Antichrist?

Who or What Is the **Antichrist?**

By Roderick C. Meredith

Can you prove, from the Bible, who or what the prophesied Antichrist really is? This is not some esoteric topic. Your correct understanding may affect whether or not you will be able to fulfill the role that God has planned for you in His Kingdom.

ATC Edition 3.1 | August 2024
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Chapter I

The Great Deception

Horrifying events are occurring more and more often in America and much of the western, professing “Christian” world. The destruction of the World Trade Center towers in New York and the devastation of the Pentagon in Washington, DC, focused the minds of millions on Bible prophecy. They now wonder, “What is God’s *purpose* in all of this?”

Indeed, prophesied events are truly speeding up. As Jesus instructed, we all need to “watch and pray,” for—within *this generation*—truly awful, Satan-inspired tragedies will begin to strike much of humanity. The “Antichrist” will be directly behind many of these events.

After September 11, 2001, many began to wonder, *is the sinister Osama bin Laden the prophesied end-time “Antichrist”*? A decade earlier, some had suspected that Saddam Hussein was the Antichrist. Before him, suspicion had fallen on Mikhail Gorbachev. Even today, some consider Adolf Hitler the personification of the Antichrist.

Surrounded by these ideas—and this confusion—can we really *know*? Can it be *proved* from the Bible *who* or *what* the “Antichrist” really *is*?

Remember, men have *all kinds* of theories about this subject. Evangelical leader Jerry Falwell even opined that the coming Antichrist will probably be *Jewish*, and that he will be from the tribe of *Dan*. What Mr. Falwell apparently does not understand is that the Israelitish tribe of Dan *split off* from Judah—or the “Jews”—thousands of years ago and is an entirely different people.

Who or What Is the Antichrist?

Historically, most Protestant theologians of past generations assumed that the pope of Rome was the “Antichrist.” In fact, the primary founder of Protestantism, Martin Luther, declared on August 18, 1520, “We here are of the conviction that the papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist” (Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 256).

Later, John Calvin, founder of what became the Presbyterian church, stated in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, “Some persons think us too severe and censorious, when we call the Roman pontiff, Antichrist. But those who are of this opinion do not consider that they bring the same charge of presumption against Paul himself, after whom we speak, and whose language we adopt.... I shall briefly shew that they [Paul’s words in 2 Thessalonians 2] are not capable of any other interpretation than that which applies them to the Papacy” (p. 149).

Were these professing Christian leaders correct? Or is there another answer? And you may ask, “Who gives *you* the right to be right? How can *you* possibly know the truth, when so many of the leaders of professing Christianity are in disagreement?”

In Psalm 111:10, the inspired word of God tells us, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.”

Many of you know that we in this Work of Christ *do believe* in keeping God’s commandments. Therefore, we *have* been able to tell you, *in advance*, about most of the major prophetic events that have been occurring. But, as they say, “the *proof* of the pudding is in the eating.” *Prophesied events are moving swiftly*. What I will tell you in this booklet can be *proven*, if you will carefully compare what I write with the Bible and actually *study* the scriptures to which I will refer. You will soon *see* that world events—including religious events—will directly follow the pattern that I will describe, so you will soon *know* who is right on this vital subject.

For investigating this subject of the “Antichrist” is not merely investigating some esoteric topic. The correct understanding of this subject could be absolutely vital to the very *survival* of you and your family in the years ahead. More importantly, it may affect whether or not you will be part of the first resurrection at Christ’s second coming—and fulfill *your role* in the Kingdom of God.

Probably within this generation, a powerful religious leader will appear on the scene. He will perform *awesome* signs and wonders. He will be the final personification of what the Bible describes as the “Antichrist.”

Yet, as we shall see, there have been in the past—and are now—*many* Antichrists. And underlying *all* of their deceptions is the “spirit of Antichrist”—the wrong approaches and false doctrines which have blinded *billions* of human beings from understanding God’s truth. The “doctrine” of Antichrist is *not* understood by most of the world’s religious leaders.

“How so?” you might ask.

Because there is a very real Satan the Devil. Jesus Christ twice called him the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30). Satan is the great *deceiver*. The Apostle John made it very clear that Satan deceives the vast majority of mankind: “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who *deceives* the *whole world*; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:9).

“But *I* am not deceived,” you might say. Do *not* be too sure.

We will now show you, in this booklet, what is undoubtedly *the major deception* that Satan has palmed off on mainstream Christianity. The widespread deception about the “Antichrist” is only the “tip of the iceberg” of the vast religious deception carried out in the name of “Christianity.” In fact, this deception is so thorough that thousands of professing Christian ministers and priests are themselves deceived and therefore do not even realize that they are perpetuating a lie. Jesus Christ similarly described the false religious leaders of His day: “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

How Millions Have Been Deceived

This mass deception is so widespread and so believable because many of its tenets “look good” on the surface. Most of its practitioners will say that we must believe in Christ. They will say that Christians should exhibit love, kindness, mercy, and patience, and that Christians should “do good” to their fellow man—give to the poor and support hospitals, charities, and homes for unwed mothers. They will say that Christians should respond to Jesus’ “law of love.”

All of this sounds biblical. It sounds very *good*.

But these practitioners *do not* tell you *which* of the laws of God are to be kept—and exactly *how* God’s laws are to be obeyed. These people will talk sentimentally about Christ being the “Lord” of our lives. But they will inevitably *fail* to explain that if Jesus is “Lord,” we must *obey* Him. They will never tell you that Jesus directly and consistently taught obedience to *all* of the Ten Commandments.

Therefore, because of this *Satan*-inspired deception, many of the bloodiest wars in modern history have been waged between professing “Christian” nations in Europe. Bishops on one side would bless their troops as they prepared for battle. The bishops on the other side did the same. Then thousands of young men—often still in their teens—would rush up some hill to shoot or brutally stab to death other young men who were often of the very same church denomination. All were supposedly “Christian.” All were supposedly of the “body of Christ”—the Church of which Jesus is the living, active Head (Ephesians 1:22–23).

Does reading this make you a little uncomfortable? Well, it should. And, more importantly, I hope and pray that it makes you *think*. Because all too many of us have just grown up in some mainstream church and taken our religious beliefs for granted—simply *assuming* that all would be well if we just went along with the crowd, blended into this world, and lived reasonably decent and “respectable” lives. That is precisely how most of us have been terribly *deceived*—as I was in years past—and have unwittingly come to believe in a *false* gospel, a *wrong* way of life, and a different Jesus Christ.

Satan Wants You to “Miss the Mark”

One of the Greek words for “sin” in the New Testament literally means “to miss the mark.” So Satan is content to let you “believe in” God and Christ as long as he can still control you, make you “miss the mark.” His goal is to keep you *out* of the coming Kingdom of God that will replace him and his demons—by blinding you to what is really happening. God inspired the Apostle James to write, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble” (James 2:19).

Then James explains how the true Christian must not merely believe in God, but must surrender to God’s will and *do* what He says (vv.

20–23). James writes, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (v. 24).

“Justified by works?” Yes—along with faith. Read verse 24 for yourself. It should be very clear that true Christianity involves more than just accepting, in faith, Christ’s death—which *is* a free gift from God—as full payment for our sins. When we accept Christ’s sacrifice, we must also make a literal covenant with our Creator to *quit sinning* in the future—to truly surrender to let Christ live His obedient life in us through the Holy Spirit. God’s inspired word tells us, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4, *KJV*). So we must *repent of sin*, repent of *breaking* God’s spiritual law, the Ten Commandments. This involves a life of humble obedience—the “works” of keeping God’s laws and commandments.

Let us understand that no one can ever *earn* salvation—it is God’s gift. The *true grace* of God leads to the *gift* of salvation (Ephesians 2:8–10; Romans 6:23). Those *willing to obey* God (Acts 5:29, 32) and who are under true grace will be God’s “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*” (Ephesians 2:10). God’s grace does not eliminate the need for obedience and keeping God’s commandments. The Apostle Paul warned that one could “receive the grace of God in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1). And while the Apostle Peter exhorted Christians to “rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13), he continues with the expectation that we do so “as *obedient children*” (v. 14; cf. v. 2).

But when men cleverly misuse “grace”—teaching “cheap grace” without *real repentance* from sin—it is the very *essence* of the doctrine of the Antichrist. This false concept has allowed millions of professing Christians to go through life regularly and habitually disobeying the Ten Commandments, yet still assuming they are “good Christians.”

The Apostle Jude was inspired to warn us of this very deception: “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the

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grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3–4).

Notice that Jude warns of false teachers using the idea of “grace” as a vehicle for “licentiousness”—license to *disobey* the very laws of God.

“Oh, my minister would *never* do that,” you may protest.

I am sorry, my friends, but chances are that he or she will verify what I am saying if you approach your priest or minister directly with this question: “Does God *require* true Christians to keep the Ten Commandments?” If you ask the question directly in these words, most ministers will begin to mumble something about being “saved by grace.” Then, they may hastily add that the Ten Commandments are a good moral guide but that “you don’t have to keep them since you are saved by grace.”

If you press on and try to “pin your pastor down” to a straightforward answer on this matter, he may try to skirt the issue or point you to the “new” commandments of Jesus. Or, perhaps, he will finally come right out and say what virtually *all* mainstream theology actually teaches—the Ten Commandments were either “nailed to the cross” when Christ died or the Apostle Paul somehow “did away” with them. As I will now clearly explain, *this is the very “heart”* of the doctrine of Antichrist.

How so?

And why is this such a serious matter? Because it creates a “lawless society”—a society *cut off* from God since the Ten Commandments actually portray His *character*. God’s awesome purpose involves putting His “divine nature” into us through the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:4). It involves our going through a process of spiritual growth and “overcoming” to reflect the very character of God and be made fit to rule with Christ in His soon-coming Kingdom. Jesus directly states, “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father” (Revelation 2:26–27).

A Doctrine of *Disobedience*

The true saints of God are being prepared by Him to replace Satan and his demons in ruling over this earth. Satan is now the “god of

this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4). He is now the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of *disobedience*” (Ephesians 2:2).

Yet the Apostle Paul tells us, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:2–3).

Why have you not heard a lot more about *this awesome purpose* of the true Christian to exercise *rulership* in the future? Because Satan wants to block this knowledge from reaching human beings so they will be *unable* to replace him and his demons in ruling this earth. Therefore he, the “father” of lies (John 8:44), has *deceived* the vast majority of all humanity—including two billion professing Christians—regarding God’s *purpose* for man and the *way* to fulfill that purpose.

Among Satan’s deceits, surely none is as great as his system of “counterfeit Christianity.” The Apostles knew this was going to happen. Paul warned, “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [of Christ’s return] will not come unless the falling away [from the truth] comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.... For *the mystery of lawlessness* is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7–8).

Notice that this false religious system is called “the mystery of *lawlessness*.” Shortly before Christ’s return, it will be headed by a figure called the “man of sin” or the “lawless one.” This man, who will perform “lying wonders” (v. 9) can be found elsewhere in Scripture as the great, miracle-working “false prophet” (Revelation 13:13; 19:20).

But realize that Paul said this false Christianity was “already at work” when he wrote these verses—even as it still is today. The proponents of this lawless system talk about love and about the Lord—but they *leave out* Christ’s powerful instruction to keep the commandments of God. Yet we know that when the young man came to Jesus asking the way to eternal life, He answered, “If you want to enter into life, *keep the commandments*” (Matthew 19:17). Then Jesus began to

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name some of the Ten Commandments. And in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19).

Pray tell, *who* claims the authority to “do away” with this clear teaching of Jesus Christ? Does *your* minister, *your* church?

Again, Paul warned the Christians of his day, “For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted; you may well put up with it” (2 Corinthians 11:4). Unwittingly, to be sure, most of us have grown up hearing about “another Jesus,” a “different spirit,” and, very definitely, a “different gospel” than the one Jesus and the Apostles preached.

Again, *why*?

Because Satan has employed every stratagem available to get people to believe the “doctrine of the *Antichrist*.” If you are willing to face *reality*, if you truly want to fulfill the very *purpose* for which you were born, you need to understand what that doctrine is and avoid it at all costs.

Jesus Himself warned us, “Take heed that no one deceives you. For *many* will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will *deceive many*” (Matthew 24:4–5). Note that it is the “many” who will be deceived. *And how?* They will be deceived because these “many” false teachers come in Jesus’ name. *Get that.* They use *Jesus’ own name* to *deceive* people. They come as “Christian” preachers and teachers—but their message is obviously *contrary* to the message Jesus Himself preached.

Because “Christian” is stamped on the outside of the package, most people unthinkingly *assume* that Christ *must* approve of the inside of the package. But these deceived people *fail* to really *study* their Bibles. They fail to *prove* all things as God commands, so they are easily deceived by a *false* “Christianity” based upon the doctrine of Antichrist.

The word *Antichrist* is first introduced in 1 John 2:18: “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now *many antichrists* have come, by which

we know that it is the last hour.” First of all, we see “*the Antichrist*” about whom they had heard. This, of course, is the “lawless one” Paul wrote about and the “false prophet” of Revelation. Yet some mistakenly identify the Antichrist as the coming world dictator and political system called the “beast” in Bible prophecy. They forget that the real “power behind the throne” is the mysterious “harlot” of Revelation 17, and that this fallen woman “rides” or *controls* the Beast of Revelation.



Chapter 2

The Harlot of Revelation 17

Millions of people—and even many theologians—are puzzled by the mysterious “harlot” of Revelation 17. Yet the word of God devotes most of an entire chapter, plus many references elsewhere, to this vital topic. Who *is* this “harlot” and *how* does she relate to the Antichrist?

Whoever this great “harlot” is, she is very powerful. She has caused the deaths of *untold millions* in the past, and millions more will die at her hand in the future. She is destined to dramatically *change* the lives of all those living in the end times—including many of you who read this booklet. This harlot sits astride a system encompassing many nations and peoples: “And he said to me, ‘The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues’” (Revelation 17:15). This harlot continues to exist right up to the Second Coming of Christ, for God’s word describes the “ten horns” or ten *kings* (v. 12) that will arise at that time: “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.... And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire” (vv. 14, 16).

Modern theologians and Bible commentaries try to be “politically correct” in their references to this great harlot. For instance, notice this comment from the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*: “In an important sense, the interpretation of this chapter controls the inter-

pretation of the whole Book of Revelation. For a majority of exegetes, Babylon represents the city of Rome. The beast stands for the Roman Empire as a whole, with its subject provinces and peoples. The seven hills (v. 9) are the seven selected dynasties of Roman emperors from Augustus to Domitian. The ten kings are heads of lesser and restless states, eager to escape their enslavement to the colonizing power. John's prediction of the fall of Babylon is his announcement of the impending dissolution of the Roman Empire in all its aspects" (ed. Frank Gaebelin, 1981, vol. 12, p. 553–554).

While the commentators correctly identify Babylon with the city of Rome, they generalize that "early Christian readers would understand that whenever they were threatened with death by *any temporal power*... they were in reality facing the bloodthirsty *mother prostitute* God was about to judge and destroy once for all" (p. 557, emphasis added).

Yet although they correctly understand the identity of "Babylon," these scholars, like most today, are unable to see that the "woman"—the great harlot—"rides" the Beast (modern Babylon). She is clearly set forth as being distinctly *separate* from the Beast—the empire with ten final kings giving their power and authority to one super-dictator also called the "beast." Obviously, the woman cannot "ride" the Beast and at the same time *be* the Beast.

Many scholars do realize, however, that the Beast of Revelation 17 is the Roman Empire and its "revivals" in various forms. For a fascinating and thorough explanation of the identity of this "beast" of Revelation 17, please write for a copy of our booklet entitled *The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor, or Soon-Coming Reality?* It will be sent to you absolutely *free* upon your request.

Who Is This "Woman"?

Throughout the New Testament, the term "woman" is used as a symbol for a church. For instance, the Apostle Paul writes the church of God at Corinth, "Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly; and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:1–2). Clearly, the true Church is here described as "betrothed" to Jesus Christ—in the position of an engaged woman to her fiancé who is Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 5:23–24, Paul writes, “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” Again, the analogy clearly identifies the true Church as being in the position of a woman—a wife who is submissive to her husband, Christ. And in Revelation 12:1–5, we read the inspired account of the “woman”—this time ancient Israel, the “*church in the wilderness*” (Acts 7:38, *KJV*)—being used by God to bring forth the Messiah, “a male Child who was to *rule* all nations with a rod of iron.”

Verse 5 picks up the story about “the woman”—now the true New Testament Church—fleeing into the wilderness to “a place prepared by God.” The following verses make it even more evident that this “woman” is, in fact, the true Church of God that is protected by God Himself from the wrath of Satan.

So when we come to the “woman” of Revelation 17, it should be very obvious that—letting the Bible interpret its own symbols—*this woman is indeed a church*.

However, this church “sitting on a scarlet beast” (v. 3) is truly a spiritual “harlot,” for she has entered into adulterous alliances with the leaders and kings of this world (v. 2), and the inhabitants of the earth are made spiritually “drunk” because of her false teachings. She is a “mother” church—giving birth to spiritual “harlots” (v. 5). And, as indicated, she deals in “mysteries,” as did the ancient pagan religions before her.

A Persecuting Church

Also, this “woman” is a great *persecuting* church. The Apostle John was inspired to write, “I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement” (v. 6).

Please think about that.

Who is this great fallen woman—a powerful church—which has and which will again be “drunk with the blood of the *saints*”? Obviously, she persecutes the true Christians—the true “saints” of God. They are described in Revelation 14:12: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who *keep the commandments* of God and the faith of Jesus.”

In contrast to the commandment-keeping Church of God, this great apostate church and her “daughter” churches *reject* the need to

keep the Ten Commandments as a way of life. Somehow, in their spiritual drunkenness, they manage to reason around the plain and clear teachings of Jesus: “If you want to enter into life, *keep* the commandments” (Matthew 19:17).

Historically, do we read about a great church that did persecute millions of people during the Middle Ages? Did such a church actually exist?

In his well-documented book *A Woman Rides the Beast* (pp. 243–244), author Dave Hunt describes what the “woman” did for hundreds of years during the Middle Ages:

Thus Roman Catholicism became “the most persecuting faith the world has ever seen... [commanding] the throne to impose the Christian [Catholic] religion on all its subjects. Innocent III murdered far more Christians in one afternoon... than any Roman emperor did in his entire reign.” Will Durant writes candidly: “Compared with the persecution of heresy in Europe from 1227 to 1492, the persecution of Christians by Romans in the first three centuries after Christ was a mild and humane procedure. Making every allowance required by an historian and permitted to a Christian, we must rank the Inquisition, along with the wars and persecutions of our time, as among the darkest blots on the record of mankind, revealing a ferocity unknown in any beast.”

So when John saw this “woman” or apostate church “drunk with the *blood* of the saints,” he was certainly not exaggerating. Even scores of Catholic writers have been mightily embarrassed about what their church practiced for hundreds of years. With the vast record now known—of priests sodomizing young men, of many popes openly maintaining mistresses and fathering illegitimate children all over Italy, and of high offices in the church being offered and bought for money—it has seemed to many objective historians that this powerful church was the veritable embodiment of evil in nearly every aspect.

Daniel’s “Little Horn”

The prophet Daniel was inspired to picture this foul religious system as a little horn. After the four great ruling kingdoms of the Gentile world—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Alexander’s Greco-Macedonian Em-

pire, and, finally, Rome—Daniel describes a “little horn” coming up among the early resurrections of the Roman Empire: “I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words” (Daniel 7:8).

In verses 25–27 of this same chapter, Daniel is inspired to describe the actions of this pompous “little horn” and how it would continue right up to Christ’s return and His *rule* over the nations: “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

Notice that this “little horn” is different from the pagan empire (v. 24), for it is, in fact, a *religious* empire. Note also that the human leader of this foul system speaks “pompous words” against God, persecutes the true Christians, and intends to change *times* and *law*. The Roman Catholic Church has done just that, as Scripture predicted—teaching that the Ten Commandments were subsumed to church authority, and that by its authority it *could change* God’s commanded seventh-day Sabbath (Exodus 20:8–11; Hebrews 4:9–11), substituting the pagan “day of the sun” in place of God’s Sabbath.

Renowned modern historian Will Durant writes, “The serious temper of the Jewish Sabbath was transferred to the Christian Sunday that replaced it in the second century” (*The Story of Civilization*, 1972, vol. 3, p. 599). How did this happen? A Roman Catholic study course tells us that “the [Roman] Church transferred the obligation from Saturday to Sunday” (*Father Smith Instructs Jackson*). The *Catholic Mirror* agrees: “The Catholic Church... by virtue of her Divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday” (September 23, 1893). If you wish further information about the true biblical Sabbath, please write for our powerful and enlightening booklet *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*



Chapter 3

The Papacy Predicted

As we have seen, the “little horn” of Daniel is describing the false church and especially its spokesman, the pope, speaking “pompous words.” In the New Testament, God inspired the Apostle John to describe the “resurrection” of the final Beast, the Roman Empire (Revelation 13:1–10). Then, in verses 11–14, “another beast” is described as rising up, who looks like a “Lamb,” or Christ, but speaks like a “dragon,” Satan the Devil (Revelation 12:9). This exceedingly clever and sinister *false prophet* “exercises all the authority of the first beast [the revived Roman Empire] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed” (Revelation 13:12). In other words, this great false prophet is able to sway most of mankind to stand in awe of and *obey* the revived Roman Empire.

Then we read, “He performs great *signs*, so that he even makes *fire* come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he *deceives* those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived” (vv. 13–14).

As this system developed, a “man of sin” would be revealed—audaciously taking to himself titles and authority that belong only to *God*. He was to sit as a veritable “god” in the temple of God—using some of the very titles of God. In fact, though Jesus called God “Holy

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Father,” Roman Catholics call the pope “Most Holy Father” and “Vicar of Christ”—which literally means “in place of Christ.”

Dave Hunt describes the blasphemous pretensions of the papacy:

The total submission that Rome requires has been expressed by many popes, but none said it more clearly than Nicholas I (858–67):

“It is evident that the popes can neither be bound nor unbound by any earthly power, nor even by that of the apostle [Peter], if he should return upon the earth; since Constantine the Great has recognized that the pontiffs held the place of God upon earth, the divinity not being able to be judged by any living man. We are, then, infallible, and whatever may be our acts, we are not accountable for them but to ourselves” (*A Woman Rides the Beast*, pp. 153–154).

So the popes have claimed that they hold “the place of *God* on earth.” And what is most frightening is that they continue to make such claims—and even get away with it in our modern world. Because the Roman Catholic Church is such an omnipresent and powerful entity, the media usually treads very lightly in attacking even the most outrageous and blasphemous claims of the modern popes and clergy.

But how is all this destined to affect your life?

The Beast and the Woman—Together Again

Few realize that the so-called “Holy” Roman Empire is being revived right under our noses. Throughout most of continental Europe, there is a great push for full European unity. One of the major players in this geopolitical chess game is—you guessed it—the pope himself.

In his detailed and revealing book *The Principality and Power of Europe* (pp. 36–37), British author Adrian Hilton explains what is now happening:

While visiting Austria in 1983, the pope spoke out against the national and artificial borders all over Europe. He added:

“Europeans should overcome the menacing international confrontations of states and alliances, and create a new united Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.”

In 1988, he continued this theme when he addressed the European parliament in Strasbourg; an occasion at which many asked why a perceived spiritual leader was addressing the issues of political unity. The Sunday Telegraph, in 1991, summed up the pope's plans for the 'evangelisation' of Europe. It stated:

"He is calmly preparing to assume the mantle which he solemnly believes to be his Divine Right—that of new Holy Roman emperor, reigning from the Urals to the Atlantic."

Although the Bible certainly does not indicate that the final pope will be the "emperor" of this revived Holy Roman Empire, it does show that he will be the "power behind the throne." As God clearly indicates to us, the coming false prophet "causes" those who will not worship this system "to be *killed*" (Revelation 13:15). So, as many popes did during the Middle Ages, he will use the power of the state—the "beast"—to force His will on the entire western world.

Remember what happened under Hitler? A knock on the door, the father or mother grabbed and hustled into a van by the state police for saying or doing some "politically incorrect" thing. Do you think that could *not* happen again? If so, you could not be more wrong.

The God who gives us life and breath clearly describes how, once again, the woman "rides" the Beast. Most people do not realize that the false teachings and practices of this fallen "woman" have permeated the *entire* world. That is precisely what John was inspired to write: "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the *whole world*; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:9).

Even sincere Protestants and Evangelicals have unwittingly been made spiritually *drunk* by the paganism of this system: "The inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Revelation 17:2). What each reader needs to realize is that *Satan* is the invisible "god" of this present world (2 Corinthians 4:3–4), and that "all nations" are spiritually *drunk*.

In describing this entire system and the harlot "daughters" that have come out of "mother" Rome, here is what the *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* by Robert Jamieson, Andrew Fausset, and David Brown has to say:

Not merely Rome, but Christendom as a whole, even as formerly as Israel as a whole, has become a harlot.... External extensiveness over the whole world and internal conformity to the world—worldliness in extent and contents—is symbolized by the name of the world city, “Babylon” (“Revelation 17:5”).

Ecumenism—Religious Harlotry?

Today’s news is full of articles about the ecumenical movement. One headline read, “Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox Leaders Renew Talks.” Another headline stated, “Episcopalian, Lutheran Alliance Forged.” More and more of the Protestant churches are trying to get together, and a number are preparing to come back to “mother”—the Roman Catholic Church. Speaking of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox talks, a July 9, 2000 article in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported:

Eventually, the churches could resolve even their ancient dispute over the pope’s jurisdiction, said the Rev. Robert Stephanopoulos, dean of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral in New York and a veteran of ecumenical meetings. “It could happen rather quickly in one respect, but when I say rather quickly, we’re still talking against the back- ground of a thousand years,” he said.

This recognition of the pope’s authority could happen much more quickly than Robert Stephanopoulos imagines. Just as when the Eastern European nations began to break away from the Soviet Union, world events sometimes seem to occur almost overnight. So additional *hundreds of millions* of members may be added to the Roman Catholic Church over the next several years as her daughters return to the fold.

And the little Church of God—scattered here and there in little groups—will seem almost like a tiny speck in comparison. Truly, we will all need understanding, faith, and courage to make it through the trying years ahead, for Jesus said that “false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24).

In the future, we will see increasing pressure brought to bear by the pope and others to make Jerusalem an “international city”—perhaps under the joint control of the Vatican and the United Nations or some other international agency. The relentless pressure of the ecumenical movement will also intensify. The Great Mother Church will be calling with increasing fervor for her daughters to come “home.”

Within the next several years, the “second” Beast of Revelation 13 will appear on the scene. We read of this man in Revelation 13:11–14: “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs *great signs*, so that he even makes *fire* come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.”

This coming powerful religious leader will look like a “lamb.” In Revelation 14 we see that *Christ* is described as the “Lamb.” So this coming religious leader will appear to be like Christ. But John writes that he “spoke like a dragon.” And in Revelation 12:9, John was inspired to write, “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who *deceives* the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Satan the Devil is clearly identified as the “dragon” right here in the book of Revelation. This coming false prophet, therefore, will appear to *billions* of human beings to be a Christ-like figure. But his message will be that of Satan the Devil. Yet this charismatic leader will perform “great signs” and even make *fire* come down from heaven. He is also described in 2 Thessalonians 2 as the “man of sin” who “opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he *is* God” (vv. 3–4). This coming religious leader, your Bible says, will be *worshiped* by his followers.

This man will appear a few years before the Second Coming of Christ, for Christ will “destroy” him “with the brightness of His coming” (v. 8). But this man is called “the lawless one.” In verse 7, Paul

writes, “For the mystery of *lawlessness* is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.” In an age of donkeys and ox carts, Paul is *not* talking about traffic laws. He is talking about a man and an entire religious system he leads—the “mystery of *lawlessness*”—which is obviously teaching against and is regularly breaking the *laws of God*.

As in Revelation 13: “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:9–10).

All of us need to realize that we are in a spiritual *war*. The forces of Satan are moving swiftly to accomplish their goals. Within the next several years, with the limited powers God allows Satan to exert in this earth’s atmosphere of which he is “prince” (Ephesians 2:2), the devil’s forces will wield unprecedented power through a religiopolitical system under their control—and will do so in the name of “Christianity.” Very few Protestant, Orthodox, or other religious leaders will have the faith and courage to stand up against this onslaught. They will enforce the dreaded “mark of the beast” and bring about a horrifying *persecution* of the true Christians—the real saints of God.

Chapter 4

Many Antichrists

We have seen what the Bible says about “the” Antichrist. But even more importantly, we should note that John was inspired to write that “even now, *many* antichrists have come” (1 John 2:18). So it should be clear that the term “Antichrist” does not apply solely to the false prophet—though he will certainly be the leading spokesman teaching the doctrines of Antichrist. Rather, as most modern scholars acknowledge, “Antichrist” simply means a spirit or person in opposition to Christ.

John continues to describe the *many* who are “Antichrist,” saying, “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father” (vv. 22–24). Notice that John was inspired to warn Christians to hold on to the original teaching that they had been given—“abide in [what] you heard from the beginning.”

This would mean “abiding in”—or obeying—Jesus Christ’s direct teaching concerning the law of God, for, from the beginning, Jesus had taught them to “keep the commandments.” He had continually warned them about using His name and yet *disobeying* His teaching. Jesus said, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the

things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). And again, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

So we “abide” in Christ and in the Father by *obeying* God and living *as* Jesus actually did—by *every* word of God. Jesus explained, “If anyone loves Me, he will *keep My word*; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does *not* keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me” (John 14:23–24).

John’s first epistle goes on to describe the “spirit of Antichrist” in greater detail: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but *test* the spirits, whether they are of God; because *many* false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (4:1–4).

Obviously, a vital key to understanding the teaching of the Antichrist is to recognize that this false doctrine does not admit the *full humanity* of Jesus Christ. It does not admit that Christ truly “has come in the flesh.”

“Why?” you might ask. What is so special about Christ having “come in the flesh”?

First, we must understand why Satan is continually trying to deceive people into disobeying God’s law—the Ten Commandments. Such lawbreaking constitutes sin since “sin *is* the transgression of the *law*” (1 John 3:4, *KJV*). And “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). So if Satan can somehow keep human beings from obeying God—and so yielding to let God build within them His very nature and character—then these disobedient men and women will continue to be under the death penalty. Cut off from God, they will be *unable* to prepare to be kings and priests in Christ’s coming Kingdom on this earth (cf. Revelation 5:10) and so replace Satan and his demons.

Diabolical Arguments

So that people will not even try to keep God's commandments, Satan uses the doctrine of Antichrist to promote the idea that mankind is unable to keep them. The teachings of the Roman Catholic Church—and most Protestant churches—in effect minimize Christ's humanity, implying in various ways that He was not fully "in the flesh." Their theology leads to the conclusion that He was not really subject to the "pulls of the flesh" in the same way we are, and was thus not really tempted as we are—indeed, even that He was not capable of sin. In their understanding, Christ was not really setting an example for us while fully in the human flesh. Satan wants us to believe that we cannot keep God's commandments and that Jesus Christ could not have sinned and broken them.

The Roman Catholic Church takes this idea even further. It falsely teaches that, except for the "Virgin Mary," all human beings since Adam and Eve have been born with "original sin," unable to keep God's commandments. Mary alone, the teaching says, was protected by an "Immaculate Conception" and led a perfect and sinless life that allowed her to become the "Mother of God." In this teaching, Mary could have sinned but did not, while our Savior did not sin and could not. If this were true, it would make Mary—not Jesus Christ—our actual example of living a sinless human life. What an *insult* to our true Savior.

Yet the book of Hebrews tells us, "For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted" (2:18). And again, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in *all points tempted as we are*, yet without sin" (4:15). Was this through some supernatural power of His own? Was Jesus "fully God" while in the human flesh? The *truth* is that He was the Personality who had been with the Father *from the beginning*: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). But later, "the Word became flesh" (v. 14).

Many scriptures clearly reveal that, in the flesh, Jesus did *not* exercise the same unlimited power which He had previously exercised before His incarnation. For instance, the gospel of Mark tells us that when Jesus came to His own home area among skeptical family and neighbors, "He *could* do no mighty work there, except that He laid His

hands on a few sick people and healed them” (Mark 6:5). Jesus Himself said, “I can of Myself do *nothing*” (John 5:30). While in the flesh, Jesus *chose* not to heal people in a faithless atmosphere.

The fully human Jesus was tempted in “all points” as we are, yet without sin. That being so, it becomes clear that there is a way for *us*, too, to keep the Ten Commandments while fully in the human flesh. But how? The same way Jesus did. Hebrews further tells us that “in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death... [He] was heard because of His godly fear” (5:7). If Jesus had to literally *cry out* with tears to the Father to “save Him from death,” it should be obvious that He was truly in the human flesh—and that we also should *cry out* for God’s help in the same way. So Jesus *did* set the example for us in keeping the Ten Commandments in the human flesh. We have a Savior and High Priest who *does fully understand* the pulls of human nature with which we must contend. Through His Spirit within us, as we will see, Christ will *empower* us to overcome temptation and keep the Ten Commandments while fully in the human flesh.

But the doctrine of Antichrist says just the *opposite*. Although Satan is clever enough not to directly teach people to *sin*, the Antichrist doctrine nevertheless opens the door for deceived people to regularly break one or more of the commandments of God with impunity—yet still feel that they are somehow “good Christians.”

A Universal Teaching

This clever reasoning—*taught in most seminaries all over the world*—goes like this: Since God’s law is spiritual and we are only physical, we *cannot* keep the holy, righteous law of God. So Christ had to keep it for us. Now we just “accept Christ” and His righteousness is somehow “imputed” to us—without any requirement for righteous works.

The above reasoning then relies on a whole series of misunderstandings and perversions of the writings of the Apostle Paul. Misguided theologians somehow put a clever “twist” on literally dozens of verses from Paul’s letters to directly *contradict* the plain, clear teachings of Jesus Christ, of His closest disciple, John, and of His brother, James. That is one reason for Martin Luther’s famous statement that the book of James was an “epistle of straw.” Luther *hated*

the fact that James directly taught obedience to the Ten Commandments (cf. James 2:8–12).

The Apostle Peter was even inspired to warn us that “Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:15–16). Yes, Peter said that men would “twist” Paul’s writings to their own destruction. Peter continues this inspired warning: “Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the *error of lawless men* and fall from your secure position” (v. 17, *NIV*).

A warning not to be carried away by the error of “*lawless men*”? Absolutely, for that is precisely the way Peter knew that deceived men would “twist” Paul’s writings into an excuse to *disobey* the spiritual law of God, the Ten Commandments.

Truly, this message needs to be heard now more than ever before. Millions in this deceived world are really confused about religion. They have become either just plain bored by mainstream religion and/or disillusioned by organized religion in general. So some have simply “tuned out.” Yet millions of others have virtually “invented” their own religion. As *Newsweek* magazine reported on teenagers and their beliefs:

Rather than seek absolute truths in doctrine, they cross denominational boundaries, savvy consumers in the broader marketplace of belief systems. Many describe themselves as spiritual rather than religious. “I believe there is a higher power at work in my life, but I do not have a name for it,” says Amy McKinney, 18. “When I pray I do not ask a god to make everything all right. Instead I ask myself to be strong.” In place of strict adherence to doctrine, many teens embrace a spirit of eclecticism and a suspicion of absolute truths. In a 1999 poll of teenagers by the religious researcher George Barna, more than half agreed with the statement “All religious faiths teach equally valid truths.” Where explorers of the baby boom tried on Zen today, Methodism tomorrow, teens might cobble together bits of

several faiths: a little Buddhist meditation or Roman Catholic ritual, whatever mixture appeals at the time (“Searching for a Holy Spirit,” May 7, 2000).

“Whatever mixture appeals”? Appalling.

Modern Religious Anarchy

This total confusion leads, of course, to religious anarchy. But, ominously, it also opens the door to leading these millions of young people to be very susceptible to the mass deceptions that the coming false prophet will perpetrate. When this man arises and begins to show himself “according to the working of Satan, with all *power, signs, and lying wonders*” (2 Thessalonians 2:9), what are these millions of confused youths going to do?

Being swept along with excitement and also by the mass hysteria that will accompany the satanic signs of the “lawless one” (v. 8), most of these young people will succumb to the enormous pressure to join hands with this coming “revival” and “return to tradition” inspired by Satan, for throughout much of Western Europe and North America, there is indeed a yearning for specific doctrines and guidelines in the field of religion and standards of behavior. Millions of people are sick and tired of the hemming, hawing, and equivocating of their ministers and priests. They are beginning to realize that many of these professing religious “leaders” are not absolutely certain about *anything*.

Many of these religious leaders question the validity of Jesus’ virgin birth, of His miracles, of His resurrection from the dead. They question the real inspiration of the Bible. They question the idea of Jesus’ Second Coming and whether there will truly be a literal Kingdom of God set up on this earth with Christ as King.

Do “all religious leaders teach equally valid truths”—as more than half of the teenagers in Barna’s poll believed? Is all religion equal? Can you just believe *anything* and have the same blessing of the Creator God and gain eternal life on your own terms?

The *only* way to be definitive and truly correct about these matters is to prove to yourself—one way or another—if the Bible is directly inspired by the real *God* who created the universe. If the Bible is just partially inspired—as so many believe today—then each person can “pick and choose” which part of the Bible he thinks is inspired.

Then, using human reasoning, he can go by that part of the Bible, even if it seems to directly contradict other parts of the Bible. Remember that the Christ of the Bible was nothing but definitive. Jesus did not “waffle.” He stated, “I am the *door* of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them” (John 10:7–8). And He said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber” (v. 1).

Later, Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (v. 27). Most of you readers have “heard” Christ’s voice speaking through this Work. You know that we do not evade, denigrate, or “mess around” with the words of the Bible. We have *proved* over and over that God, the Creator, directly inspired the Bible. It is God’s “Instruction Manual” for mankind. It is specific in what it tells us to do.

The Crux of the Matter

The clearest passage of all explaining Antichrist is found in 2 John 6–7: “This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it. For many deceivers have gone out into the world *who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh*. This is a deceiver and an *antichrist*.” In this passage, we see first of all how John is inspired to define love: “that we walk *according to His commandments*.” In context, the “commandments” being spoken of are clearly the commandments of God the Father (cf. v. 4)—not some “new” commandments of Jesus. Even though John wrote in the 90s AD, some 60 years after Christ’s crucifixion and 20 years after Paul’s death, there is not even a *hint* that God’s commandments were “nailed to the cross” or “done away with” by the Apostle Paul. Then John reminds his readers that the commandments were those they had heard “from the beginning.” In other words, they are the clear teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 19:17, and elsewhere.

Then, in verse 7, John warns that the “deceivers” do *not* teach “Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.” He describes such teaching as “Antichrist.” The significance of Jesus Christ “*as coming in the flesh*” is that—as in the original Greek—the present continuous tense is here used, denoting something that is *now* happening.

Who or What Is the Antichrist?

The well-known *Expositor's Bible Commentary* attempts to explain this passage (2 John 7) in the following words:

Curiously the tense is changed from the past tense “has come [eleluthota] in the flesh” (1 John 4:2) to the present participle “as coming [erchomenon] in the flesh.” It would be possible, therefore, to interpret this as a reference to Jesus’ return: he is coming (i.e., will come) in the flesh (cf. 1 John 2:28; 3:2). But since we know of no controversy in this area, this seems unlikely. Dodd obscures the sense by translating the participle *erchomenon* in the past tense, as if its meaning were simply identical with 1 John 4:2, and then offers the surprising explanation that “our author is not skilled in the niceties of the Greek idiom” (*Johannine Epistles*, p. 149). It is far safer, however, to assume that the writer does know the difference between a present participle and a perfect (past tense) and that his intention is to say something beyond what he was saying in 1 John 4:2 (vol. 12, p. 364).

As those highly trained Greek scholars acknowledge, John is indeed saying something “beyond” his statement in 1 John 4:2. John not only says that Christ *has* come fully in the human flesh; God inspired John in this latter passage to reveal that Christ is *now* coming in the flesh.

How?

As we have already seen, Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and *make Our home with him*” (John 14:23). Through the Holy Spirit, Christ and the Father actually *live* within the truly converted Christian, guiding him, inspiring him, and *empowering* him to keep the commandments and live God’s way of life.

The Apostle Paul was also inspired to make this very plain when he wrote, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, *KJV*).

That is the key. Through the Spirit, Christ will literally *live His life* in *our* human flesh. *He* will give us the strength to obey God’s commandments.

Religious opponents challenge the real Christian by saying, “You *can’t* keep the Ten Commandments. They are spiritual and you are only physical.” But one who is led by God’s Holy Spirit may truly reply, “You are right. In my own human strength, I can’t. But to the degree I yield to God’s Holy Spirit, I can and I *will* keep God’s commandments. *Christ within me* helps me not to kill, steal, lie, commit adultery, covet, dishonor my parents, break God’s Sabbath, practice idolatry, take God’s name in vain, or have another ‘god’ before the true God. I may slip in some point occasionally, but I will then repent and confess my sin to God and have His forgiveness (1 John 1:8–9). Then I quickly get back on God’s path and, through His Spirit, *grow* in grace and knowledge. I am not perfect. But, through Christ living His life within me, I am *growing* toward perfection and walking in God’s law as my *basic way of life*.”

Christ Lives Within the True Christian

The doctrine of Antichrist, then, is that Christ does not literally live His life within His people today. It is the false teaching that Christians today can live a different kind of life from what Jesus lived and still be His true followers. It often includes the idea that Christ was righteous in our stead, and therefore we do not have to be. We just accept Him and His righteousness is imputed to us. Effectively, God “kids Himself” and pretends that we are really righteous when we actually are *not*.

This doctrine is a damnable *lie*.

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). He will live the same kind of life in you and me today that He lived nearly 2,000 years ago when He walked this earth in the human flesh. At that time, He continually taught obedience to all of God’s commandments (Matthew 5:19). We have seen His answer to the young man asking Him how to inherit eternal life: “Keep the commandments” (19:17). Near the end of the Apostolic Age, God inspired the Apostle John to describe the *true* saints of God: “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

There are many, many false ministers today who are teaching the doctrine of Antichrist, a doctrine that sanctions disobedience

to God's commandments—a doctrine of “no works.” The Apostle Paul said of these ministers, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13–15). You will notice here that Satan has ministers who appear to be righteous. Ironically, their end—their final reward—will be according to their “works,” *the very thing they seek to deny*.

God intends for us to obey His commandments, do good works, and live by His every word. *Once you get this principle straight, you can clearly understand the “spirit of Antichrist” and how to test whether any religious leader’s idea or doctrine is of God.* Then, by diligent study of God’s word and by constant prayer, you will come to a deeper understanding of the real purpose of your life and experience closer contact with the Living God than you may ever have dreamed possible.

You will come to see who truly is of God—His true Church, which has faithfully proclaimed the same Gospel He sent through Jesus Christ. In this end time, that message—of obedience to God’s Kingdom and rule—is to be preached by His Church as a witness to all nations (Matthew 24:14). You are reading that message this very instant.

In Revelation 12:17, the true Church of God is described as a woman persecuted by the devil. This Church is a remnant. Its members are those “who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Again, the true saints of God are described in like manner in Revelation 14:12: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who *keep the commandments* of God and the faith of Jesus.”

Yes, Jesus Christ is to live and dwell within His people today through the Holy Spirit. To the degree they yield to Him, their lives will be ones of full and complete obedience, just as Jesus’ life was in the flesh. Their customs, their traditions, their way of life will be the same as His in every respect, because He does not change. And He will be *living* within them. Then Christ and the Father can be absolutely sure that their people are fully surrendered to God, who can continually impart to true Christians His very divine nature and

character—and so prepare them to be *kings* and *priests* in the literal Kingdom of God soon to be set up on this earth. “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, *and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father*, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:5–6).

Examine yourself honestly. Have you really understood Christianity before? *Is Christ really living His life in you?* Do you have the spiritual “backbone” to act on the knowledge you have just received?



Chapter 5

Restoring Original Christianity

As many of you readers already know, we in this Work are restoring—for those willing to heed—the true Christianity of Jesus and the Apostles. This genuine, original Christianity has definitely been lost as far as mainstream “churchianity” is concerned. It is important to realize that if Jesus Himself would walk into a typical Protestant or Catholic Church today, He would find people there with an entirely different concept of God than He taught.

These folks would be observing different days for worshipping God—days that are pagan in origin and which utterly *fail* to point to the true God and His great *plan* as the biblical Holy Days do. Jesus would find that most of these professing “Christians” have *no idea* about how to truly keep the Ten Commandments or about the importance Christ placed upon them (see Matthew 19:17). These blinded individuals go to *war* with Britain, for instance, in one generation, with Spain in another, with Germany and Japan in another. They and their deceived ministers seemingly pay *no attention* to Jesus’ *very clear instruction* in Matthew 5:43–44: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, *love your enemies*, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”

These professing Christians are utterly *blinded* to the fact that true Christians are *now* in training to become kings and priests under

Jesus Christ and to serve under Him in *ruling* this world during the next thousand years (see Revelation 5:9–10; 20:6). Rather, these folks *assume*—*contrary* to Jesus’ teachings—that at death they will “go to heaven” and have *nothing* to do. So the false teachings of professing Christianity have *blinded* them to the entire *purpose* God is working out here on earth.

In a typical church today, Jesus would find people who have a sentimental feeling about Him personally, but have virtually *no* understanding of the powerful *message* He preached. They speak about “the Lord Jesus Christ.” But, frankly, He is *not* their “Lord”—for they do *not* obey Him or even grasp *how they should* obey Him. And Jesus Himself said, over and over, “*Why* do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do *not* do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Again: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*’” (Matthew 7:21–23). Indeed, those who fail to preach and to practice genuine *obedience* to the Ten Commandments are in terrible trouble.

God’s word clearly indicates that the *vast* majority of human beings today are *deceived*, for God speaks of “the Devil and Satan, who *deceives* the whole world” (Revelation 12:9). And the Apostle Paul warned the Corinthians, “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has *blinded*, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:3–4).

The Apostle Jude warned us specifically, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the *faith* which was *once for all* delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3–4).

It is significant that Jude was inspired by God to point out that these false teachers would turn grace into “license”—which is exactly

what they do today, for the common Protestant teaching is that you are “saved” by a sentimental acceptance of Christ’s death and that—at that point—there is *nothing* else you really have to do. No obedience to the Ten Commandments. No required growing in grace, in knowledge, and in Christian maturity. No further “overcoming” of your human nature, of the world, or of Satan the Devil.

What You Should Do

Recent news reports from many nations have indicated that Roman Catholic persecution of religious minorities continues. Although the Roman Catholic Church has learned to smile and act agreeably in nations where Protestants or others are in the majority, the old demons of hate and authoritarianism come out very quickly when it is in control.

An article in *Christianity Today* reported, “In March, about 70 Protestant families were expelled from the Mexican village of Plan de Ayala, in Chiapas state, by the town’s Roman Catholic majority. ‘Fourteen homes were demolished by the mob as the Protestants fled to the hills for refuge,’ reports Seventh-day Adventist pastor Isaias Espinosa” (“Mexico: Healing the Violence,” July 25, 2000). This is just a tiny sampling of the type of religious oppression practiced by this powerful church. And its leaders continue to emphasize that they are the *only* true church—that others are, in effect, only “second-class Christians.” Note this September 5, 2000 report by Victor Simpson of the *Associated Press*:

The Vatican rejected Tuesday what it said are growing attempts to depict all religions as equal, accusing some Catholic theologians of manipulating fundamental truths of the church.... Vatican equality refers to the ‘personal dignity’ of individuals and not to religious doctrine. It is the second recent document by the congregation [the Roman Catholic “Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith”] warning against abuses by Catholics in dealings with other religions and denominations. Italian media have reported the congregation also has warned against the phrase “sister churches,” saying that it contradicts the Catholic Church’s identity as “mother” of all churches. That document has not yet been released.... Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, at a news

conference repeatedly referred to a trend toward a “religious relativism.” ... “The lack of unity among Christians is certainly a wound for the church,” the document said, saying it hindered “the complete fulfillment of her universality in history.” The declaration, a complex theological document, was titled “On the Unity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church” (“Vatican Rejects Equality of Religions”).

So the Roman Catholic Church not only admits, but even insists that it is the “*mother*” of all professing Christian churches. And it insists also that it *alone* has the “keys” to God’s Kingdom.

Truly, it is time to *wake up*.

It is time for all who believe in God to go back and *prove* whether their religious beliefs and practices actually came out of the Bible—or out of “Babylon.” For the Creator God tells all who will heed that “*all the nations* have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.’ And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘*Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues*’” (Revelation 18:3–4).

Although, as the Apostle John wrote, “even now, *many* antichrists have come” (1 John 2:18), it is also true that the embodiment of Antichrist will be most fully expressed in the great false prophet described in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–10 and Revelation 13:11–14. This cunning individual will appear at first as a great “peacemaker” and “benefactor” of mankind. Before long, he will begin performing *miracles*—even bringing *fire* down from heaven (Revelation 13:13).

But, again, His teaching will be “anti-Christ.” There will be lots of ritual, pomp, ceremony, and flowery talk. But there will *not* be the clear teaching of Jesus of Nazareth to keep God’s commandments and literally imitate Christ—*surrendering* to let Jesus Christ live His obedient life within us through the Holy Spirit.

Remember always, *that* is the key.

Satan the Devil is glad to have you “believe in Christ”—as long as *your* Christ is a *false* Christ. He is glad to have you go to the “church of *your* choice”—providing that he can deceive you into going to a

church led by blinded, commandment-rejecting theologians, for as Jesus said, when “the blind *leads* the blind, *both* will fall into a ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

In Christ’s name, I urge you—please begin to genuinely *study* your Bible as never before. Also, do yourself a favor and write in for your absolutely *free* enrollment in our inspiring and most helpful *Tomorrow’s World Bible Study Course*. Study through this course and follow Paul’s inspired admonition: “*Prove* all things, hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21, *KJV*).

Again, I urge you to write in immediately and request your *free* copy of our truly revealing booklets entitled *The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor, or Soon-Coming Reality?* and *Which Day is the Christian Sabbath?* These booklets—coupled with this booklet you are now reading—will give you the full picture and *proof* of the nature of the powerful and ominous forces now rising in Europe.

As Jesus said, “Watch.” Keep your eyes on the revival of the Holy Roman Empire. “Watch” how it slowly but surely begins to gain total power in most of Europe—then Central and South America and, finally, most of the entire world. “Watch” how other churches are, bit by bit, coaxed, persuaded, or finally coerced into going back to the “mother” church. Frankly, you will be disappointed to see how many supposedly dedicated Protestant and evangelical leaders will be maneuvered into giving up much of what they have always believed when real *pressure* is put upon them.

Will *you* also turn aside from the God of the Bible? Will you join or continue to be part of a watered-down “Christianity” where deceived church members *regularly* violate God’s commanded Sabbath and where they are “allowed”—or perhaps even encouraged—to fight and to kill in human warfare, contrary to Jesus’ teaching (Matthew 5:43–45)? Will you be part of a church where pomp, ceremony, and the worship of idols is practiced, where the whole concept of *literal obedience* to the Ten Commandments as a *way of life* is *not* taught, and where clever arguments against the need for true Christians to keep God’s commandments are regularly employed against those who dare to heed Christ’s actual words?

Soon, the ultimate personification of the Antichrist will appear on the world scene. Appearing at first as a kind and gentle “peacemaker,” he will gradually assert more and more authority. His au-

Who or What Is the Antichrist?

thority will be enhanced by the *false miracles* Satan performs through him (Revelation 13:13). Then the adoring masses will scream with excitement when they see him and the *doctrine* of the Antichrist will permeate nearly all of professing Christianity—all except the “little flock” (Luke 12:32) described in Revelation 12:13–17.

For your eternal good, pray for real *understanding, faith, and courage*. Obey Jesus’ instruction, “Watch therefore, and *pray* always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36).

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