

The Antichrist Exposed

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[0:00] If you weren't here this morning and Wednesday night, this will not make any sense to you, but for those who were, I will not be in 1 Chronicles tonight.

I'm not going to go there. I will actually be in 1 John chapter 2, and knowing me, I'll probably jump around a little bit, but 1 Chronicles is not in my thoughts right now.

Now, having told you I'm going to be in 1 John, I'm going to give you a passage out of Revelation.

You don't need to turn there, but it's an amazing passage.

It says there was war in heaven. You can get dizzy thinking about that.

A war broke out in heaven. We don't tend to think of heaven as a place of war, and it's obviously not a war any of us are familiar with.

[1:18] It's not that type of war. But there was this tremendous rebellion that occurred in heaven, and actually from a review of Scripture as humans, we know very little of what went on.

During that period, none of us were there. At that time, though, the highest created being in the universe, and I thought about asking, can anyone tell me his name?

But I was worried that someone might give us the wrong name and focus on highest instead of created. The highest created being in the universe, and that was an angel by the name of Lucifer.

Remember, Jesus wasn't created. He's uncreated. He's eternal. The eternal God. Lucifer decided somehow, I don't know how he came to this conclusion, that he could establish his throne above the throne of the Most High God.

And equally shocking is hundreds of millions, if not billions, we don't know the number, of angels cast their lot with Lucifer, believing that they were going to be on the winning side.

[2:50] I mean, I'd like to think if I was there as an angel, first of all, I wouldn't think Lucifer would pull it off. And secondly, I sure wouldn't want to bet my eternity on it, that he was going to pull it off.

But a lot did. They thought he would be the victor. Well, he wasn't. Lucifer, in fact, was cast out of heaven, along with the myriad of rebellious angels, and they were cast down to a particular planet in the universe known as planet Earth, where we live.

Lucifer was renamed Satan, and the angels that fell with him are today called demons. And ever since, Satan was cast out.

He has been opposed to God. He is the evil in this world. He opposes God. He opposes God's plans for his people.

He opposes God's plan for this planet and universe. Satan was there in the fall in the Garden of Eden, when the human race fell into sin.

[4:17] He was there at the flood in Noah's day. He was the driving force behind the Tower of Babel. He was able to afflict Job with the permissive will of God.

He was in the desert tempting Christ. And you can bet that he was in the crowd watching the Lord when he was being sacrificed on the cross.

Satan is the supreme antichrist in the universe and has for many millennia energized evil men to serve as antichrists throughout history.

Now, the term antichrist appears only in John's letters. The concept of antichrist, however, appears throughout the scriptures, even back into some of the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

The word itself is a combination of two words. One is Christos or Christ. But the other word is anti, meaning the antichrist.

[5:29] And that word anti is very interesting. It has a dual meaning. And both apply to Satan. Anti means against or opposed to.

And it also means in place of. It has the same meaning. And it can both be attributed to the antichrist. He is against God and wants to be in the place of God.

Now, anyone, according to scripture, is an antichrist if they oppose the true Christ, seek to replace him with someone or something else or falsely represent him.

That's the antichrist, the spirit of the antichrist. Such views are grounded in distorting the nature of Christ.

For instance, there are many, even in the church today, especially the liberal wing of the church, who are very willing to proclaim Jesus as a really good man, great philosopher, good teacher, man of love.

[6 : 43] But they will not affirm Jesus as God incarnate. They claim that Jesus had no special relationship with God, was merely a man who lived a very decent life, and because of that came to the attention of God.

John refers to those who make those sorts of claims as antichrists. In fact, this is what John says in 1 John 4, verse 3.

Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.

This is the spirit of the antichrist. Well, John just laid that on every human religion, every agnostic, every atheist. Most people on the earth would fit into that category.

The theme of the antichrist plays a significant role in the future. There is coming upon this world, I believe, a seven-year period of hell known as the tribulation.

[7 : 48] When's that going to happen? I have no clue, and neither does anyone else. Books are written telling us when it's going to start, but no one knows. During that time, one man will emerge as the ultimate antichrist, but many will come in the spirit of the antichrist and already have.

In fact, when John wrote his letter, it had only been a brief 60 years since the church was formed at Pentecost. From then until now, countless thousands of antichrists have plagued the church.

Paul called them false teachers or false prophets or false preachers. They did so in John's day, and they do so in our day. Now, in his writing, John will provide the church with the definitive description of the antichrists that have so infected the church through the centuries, and he starts by introducing us to those antichrists in chapter 2, verse 18.

He says, John refers to his children, Tekna in the Greek, Teknia. It is the last hour. It is the last hour. And just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now, many antichrists have appeared.

From this, we know that it is the last hour. John refers to his audience as children, or in the Greek language, little children, and that's those who belong to the family of God.

[9 : 30] Through this letter, the father is warning his children in the church of the impending danger of those who are antichrists who may come into the church.

And certainly that has happened. The New Testament is full of that. Paul has been warning about that in all of his earthly ministry of the false teachers, that there would be antichrists come into the church.

And he says, there is a danger. This is a warning. Such antichrists pose serious risk to the church. Newer baby Christians who have not matured in faith through the sanctification process are especially vulnerable to their teaching.

John underscores how important this subject is by telling his readers, listen, it's the last hour. Now, he wasn't referring to 60 minutes. That was over a long time ago.

But it is the last hour. Now, bear in mind that John wrote this some 1,900 years ago. The last hour began at the first advent of Christ and it will end in the return of Christ.

[10 : 50] And if that was the last hour in John's day, just think what it is in our day. I think today John would come in here and say, beloved, it is the last seconds of the last hour.

Be ready. Be ready. When Christ was incarnated and became a man to dwell among us, Satan was aroused to a fever pitch.

Remember, he is the God of this world. The true God, the Father in heaven, permits him for a time to be known as the God of this world or the God of the air.

Suddenly, Satan wakes up some morning, I assume he sleeps, he wakes up some morning and the true God is walking around and ministering in his world, in Satan's world.

He wasn't a happy camper. As a result of his intense hatred for Christ, Satan made sure that many antichrists would rise to oppose the true Christ and to oppose his followers and to oppose his followers in the church.

[12 : 04] Now, when Christ walked upon the earth, remember, the inspired scripture was contained in 39 books of the Old Testament. They were in scrolls. Though not named as such, clearly, there

were men who possessed the very spirit of the antichrist, did, in fact, fit the blueprint to be called antichrist, little antichrist, even back in the Old Testament.

The prophet Daniel foresaw a world leader that would arise in the spirit of Antiochus Epiphanes. This was the guy, evil man, an antichrist, who slaughtered a pig on the altar of God and made the Jewish priest eat its flesh.

Nothing is more abhorrent to a Jew than a pig. By the way, the same thing applies to the Muslims. We Christians, we're allowed to eat those things, but not them.

They won't do it. They won't touch it. At the end times, a man would arise that would be like Epiphanes and he will be the antichrist.

[13 : 20] And let me say some things about him. He's going to be a problem solver. He's going to solve a lot of problems of the world. Does the world have any problems? Yeah, I think a few.

He's going to be a problem solver. He's going to have a superior intellect. He's going to have great speaking skills, probably beyond compare.

He will serve as a leader in things economic, political, military. He will make peace with Israel. Wow. And then eventually he will turn against them. There was a quote by some European leader a few years ago. If someone would come on the scene and solve our problems, we will follow him, be he God or the devil.

We don't care who he is, just solve our problems. The prophet Zechariah spoke of this person even though he was not yet, has not even yet appeared in our day. And this is what Zechariah in chapter 11 says, For behold, I, God, will raise up a false shepherd in the land.

[14 : 26] The lost and perishing he will not miss or visit. The young and scattered he will not go to seek. The wounded and broken he will not heal. Nor will he feed those that are sound and strong, but he will eat the flesh of the fat ones and break off their hooves.

That's to consume their flesh. Woe to the worthless and foolish shepherd who deserts the flock. The sword shall smite his arm and his right eye. The arm shall be utterly withered and his right eye utterly blinded.

This is a reference to the Antichrist who will be the exact opposite of the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep of his pasture.

This man will be a false shepherd who does not protect the sheep. Instead, he seeks to slaughter them. In the analogy, his arm represents great strength and his eye great intelligence.

God will destroy both when vengeance falls upon him. When John wrote this letter, 1 John, the book of Matthew was already available to the church.

[15 : 36] and they would have known about the Olivet Discourse. Let me read to you a few words of chapter 24 of Matthew. Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place, let the reader understand.

then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in their house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.

But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days. But pray that your flight will not be in the winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulations such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now nor ever will.

Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, Behold, here is the Christ or there he is, do not believe him.

For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders so as to mislead if possible even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance.

[16 : 58] I didn't know I was going to put this in but where it says many will say, Behold, here is the Christ or there he is. Do not believe him. Do you know how many guys are on this earth right now claiming to be Christ?

I mean, it's unbelievable how many. Hundreds. Hundreds of them. Thousands of them. There's a guy in Chicago that has about a four million person following.

He's from San Juan, Puerto Rico and he says he's Jesus. Doesn't even sound like Jesus. I mean, you know, he's got Spanish accent. Muirapidamente in Puerto Rican.

I live there with my parents. The same Holy Spirit who inspired Zachariah and Matthew to write their words also inspired the Apostle Paul.

Listen to what Paul has to say in 2 Thessalonians. We're just about to start studying that on Sunday morning in our class. Now, we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has already come.

[18:15] That was their big hang-up. They were scared to death. They had missed the rapture of the church. Let no one in any way deceive you for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called God or object of worship so that he takes his seat in the temple of God displaying himself as being God.

Do you not remember that while I was still with you I was telling you of these things and you know what restrains him now so that in his time he will be revealed. 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. Then that lawless one will be revealed from the Lord he will slay with the breath of his mouth and bring to an end the appearance of his coming. That is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness. Those are the words of Paul. And note that the apostle Paul said these things would not occur until there was a great apostasy. There has to be an apostasy.

[19:54] What is that? That means there will be a falling away or a forsaking or a defection. Now what is apostasy? Apostasy is always the abandonment of a formerly professed position.

Let me repeat that. Apostasy is the abandonment of a formerly professed position. In that regard a man living in a tribal environment in a remote area of the world never before exposed to the teachings of Christ cannot be an apostate.

He will not be judged for apostasy. He may go to hell for his sins but he will not be declared an apostate because he did not profess a belief in Christ and then fell away.

Apostates profess some level of belief in the gospel and then they fall away. And the world is full of them. Full of them.

Throughout redemptive history there has been apostates. John wrote about them. Paul wrote about them. They have and do plague the church.

[21:11] I saw a statistic some years ago in Southern Baptist life some 265 people a day leave our ranks to join a cult. They reject the truth of Christ as the one true way of salvation and eternal life.

But Paul is not writing here just about a general apostasy that's always been with us. He is speaking of the last days just as John has done.

Again Paul in 1 Timothy. But the spirit explicitly says that in latter times some will fall away from the faith paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

Now here Paul is talking about a unique apostasy a unique falling away that has not yet occurred. A man the Antichrist the Antichrist will one day arise and openly oppose and defy God and he will declare himself to be the true God.

And we don't have time to develop this evening but he will do so from the Temple Mount in Israel declaring himself to be the one true God. He will operate apart from God's holy laws and commandments.

[22:53] Now at present this man is he on earth? I don't know. I don't know. But at present I think he is he fell to earth at present this man of lawlessness is restrained.

The scriptures say there are restraints on him. You think it's bad now wait till the restraints are removed. That restraining force is the Holy Spirit.

Now one day the Holy Spirit as the restrainer will be removed as the restraining force. That will occur in the perfect timing of God.

I believe that will occur through the rapture of the church. Where does the Holy Spirit dwell? In believers. He indwells us, never leaves us, never forsakes us. Does that mean the Holy Spirit will be gone from earth?

No. He's everywhere. You go to the furthest planet, the furthest in the universe, he's there. He's everywhere. But as the restraining force, he will be removed. When we depart, he departs with us. [24:01] For now there are many antichrists among us who are members of the true church. The true church has always had wheat and tares, true and false. How can we identify them?

Well, John will deal with that in what I think is a real sweeping statement. He says this, starting in verse 19 of chapter 2. They went out from us, but they were not really of us.

If they had been of us, they would have remained with us, but they went out so it would be shown that they are all not of us.

Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the father and the son. Whoever denies the son does not have the father.

You ever talk to somebody and say, I believe in God, I just don't believe in Jesus. Can't do that. You don't have that available to you. Whoever denies the son does not have the father.

[25:12] The one who confesses the son has the father also. these things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

Antichrists have been members of the church since the early days following Pentecost. And there are probably more antichrists today at any point in church history.

I don't recommend this, but you can catch a film on television. Don't recommend it. I think part and parcel to all this, I believe we've moved into the Laodicean period in the churches of Revelation.

I think this accounts for it. Antichrist tried to destroy and sabotage the church through lies and deceptions. Now Satan, here's the church, he just wants us off a little bit.

He doesn't want us down here. Just a little tick here and then we're off center. How can they be identified? How do you identify an Antichrist?

[26:16] Well, I was hoping someone answered that so I'm going to give you a list. First, they depart from the fellowship. They depart from the fellowship.

Now we might say, well, good riddance. You're an Antichrist, you left. But never underestimate the path of destruction they leave behind.

They leave behind a path of destruction. It is done by a sophisticated and sometimes subtle strategy of false teaching and other lies.

It is usually not overt but covert. Eventually the Holy Spirit will intervene through godly people who will challenge these Antichrists and their teachings. The Antichrist will depart but leave behind hurt feelings, troubling questions, and a weakened church.

Some weaklings, even weak though, true Christians will leave with them. They just don't want to go through any hurts anymore. And often those who have left have no reason to they can't explain why they left.

[27:28] It was a herd mentality. They got caught up in the departure. Sadly they will leave behind these Antichrists a trail of confusion and suspicion as people try and sort out the truth from the false.

Many in the church will question why this brother or sister was forced out. Some usually through gossip and whispering will vilify the pastor or other leaders who though taking a biblical stand will be branded as unloving.

But John is very clear. Antichrist will eventually depart a strong church. They went out from us because they really weren't or not one of us.

They didn't want to stick around and hear from that pulpit. Second, Antichrists deny the true faith. Another way to identify them. John says that the Antichrists are liars who deny that Jesus is the Christ.

The true mark of saving faith is a right view of Jesus. That's the mark of saving faith. We embrace and proclaim his person, his work, and his saving message.

[28:44] No one can be saved but reject the truth about Christ as taught in the Bible. They're antithesis to each other. I always get aggravated by people who say God as I perceive him to be.

It doesn't matter what a person perceives him to be. Our perception must be in lockstep with biblical revelation. True believers acknowledge him as the Messiah and King of the universe.

He's the sovereign Lord of the universe. We affirm that he is the only God man in the universe. He is very unique in that world. There is no other God man. And we then seek in my case poorly to his We want to live out our lives obeying his commands.

Antichrists teach that you can have the father without the son. And dare I say this without naming any names of course but there's Antichrists in pulpits in this town.

They'll talk about God as father. They'll talk about God as mother. But they will not talk about the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot have the father without possibility.

[30 : 02] Anyone that denies the son denies the father. Anyone denying the deity of Christ does not know the true God. True believers embrace Christ in all his offices.

He is the son of God, the son of man, the promised prophet, priest, king, redeemer, the sovereign Lord. Every Antichrist denies these central truths.

So how might we identify Antichrists among us? They focus on confusing the faithful. Those with the spirit of Antichrist try and mislead the saints, the saints of God.

They are so bold, they think they can mislead the very elect of God. Now the Lord thankfully says that is an impossibility. But Antichrist can muddy the waters.

They can tamper with the spiritual confidence people have in the truth. They can cause people to question or doubt the word of God. They can confuse the meaning of key doctrines.

[31 : 07] Now the good news, no Antichrist can take away the faith of a true believer. Cannot happen. No Antichrist can destroy the security that belongs to the truly saved.

No Antichrist can steal the eternal life that belongs to the truly elect and regenerated children of God. In other words, all Antichrists, including the Antichrist, will ultimately fail in their mission of destruction.

You know, when U.S. Secret Service agents go through their academy, they learn how to identify counterfeit money. The best way to know what is counterfeit is to know what the real article is.

So they learn what the real money looks like. That's what we need to be doing. We need to be in that word so when Antichrist come, we'll know what is false. If you know what is true, you will be able to identify what is false.

I don't suggest you buy books on what is false. Just buy this book. It's down here. It's true. It's true. What about the characteristic of Christians?

[32 : 23] 1 John again. But you, he's talking to you all, but you have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know.

I've not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know it and because no lie is of the truth. As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning.

If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you will also abide in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which he himself made to us eternal life.

As for you, the anointing which you receive from him abides in you and you have no need for anyone to teach you but as his anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie and just as he has taught you, you abide in him.

So let me make some closing comments. True Christians accept the faith once delivered to us by the saints. As opposed to antichrist, true believers seek to walk in the truth.

[33 : 39] We are to pattern our walk after the walk of Jesus or to walk as he walked. The antichrist inside churches are too busy sowing seeds of confusion to try and walk as Jesus walked.

Neither do they possess the spirit of God who allow them to walk in such a manner. Believers walk in truth. Antichrist propagate lies. You can know who are true believers because they believe the word of God once delivered to the saints.

Their beliefs have been energized by the very spirit of Christ. All true Christians have that anointing from the Holy One. When the word says that we have no need of teachers, it is not spurning human teachers.

What am I doing up here? It is not the spurning of human teachers that are legitimate. God has created even an office of pastor, elder, and teacher.

And he says in Ephesians, he did so for equipping the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ. True Christians remain faithful.

[34 : 54] Even though the Lord knows we will not lose our salvation, he still exhorts his children to persevere. I hope you're all busy persevering in this darkening world.

We're to live and abide in what we have heard concerning the truth. It is through perseverance that we are sanctified. The ultimate prize of perseverance is eternal life.

Now let me say this, and I want to get it right so there's no confusion. You are not saved because you persevere.

You persevere because you are saved. It is a gift from God to his children, to his saved little ones. perseverance.

The difference between the Antichrist and true believers are clear. Antichrist deny the faith, depart from the faith, seek to deceive the faithful.

[35 : 59] True believers affirm the faith, remain in the faith, and cannot ultimately be deceived.

Now, probably not a lot of us, when we lay down at night, read the Westminster Confession faith.

I've done that, I'm sure Mike has, but not a lot of us do that. I'm not going to ask how many people in here actually do that. But here's one of the articles in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all. Yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a sense, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

What's he saying? A child can understand it. if the Spirit of God is opening up the truth of that Scripture concerning salvation. They whom God has accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein, to the end, and be eternally saved.

And that is good news. That is very good news.