



Prophecy in Perspective

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An email newsletter

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THE ANTICHRIST

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. (1 John 2:18)

When the Apostle John wrote these words of warning to the early church near the end of the first century, he stated a truth that is still with us today. The reality of the presence of many antichrists today is seen in the rising number of false teachers and their deceptive teachings that abound today. In the last two centuries the biblical church has been assailed by a number of key challenges and systematic denials of the truth "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). These are sound doctrinal truths that the Lord has committed to Christians and Christian teachers for them to faithfully impart to the church through the Word of God.

The nineteenth century saw the rise of various cults that are still with us in greater strength than ever in these latter days. There are the Mormons, along with various offshoots of the original false revelations and visions of Joseph Smith. There is the cult of Seventh Day Adventism built on the deceptive and unscriptural writings of Ellen G. White whose writings are viewed as being as inspired as the Scriptures themselves! Out of the early days of Adventism came the wildly erroneous teachings of Charles Taze Russell, founder of what is known today as the Jehovah's Witnesses. The eighteen hundreds also saw the appearance of Christian Science. Its creator, Mary Baker Eddy, turned many away from the hope of salvation, the Bible's truth about Jesus Christ, through her book, Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures. Many thousands of deceived followers have perished into a dark and eternal hell through the apostate teachings of these and many other wolves in sheep's clothing about whom Jesus gave ample warning: "*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves*" (Matthew 7:14).

In the twentieth century, Science fiction author, L. Ron Hubbard created his science fiction magnum opus in his monumental mythology: Dianetics. Through this truly demonically inspired work, Hubbard has foisted upon a biblically ignorant world one of the darkest and most deceptive of the devil's false religions existing today, that of Scientology. Hundreds of thousands are in bondage to the Bible-denying mythologies and occultism of these and many other cults today. As the Apostle John wrote, these cults are the works and teachings of the "...many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2:18).

As the time of the Antichrist nears its appearance upon the world scene, the spirit of antichrist is already preparing the world for his occultic and global reign. This preparation is seen not only through cults and false religions, but through the various unbiblical movements and teachings in what is regarded as the church today. Growing numbers of men and women in the church are exhibiting cult-like influence of personality through false teaching in what is sometimes called the Emerging and Seeker-sensitive churches. Many of these leaders through magnetic-like personalities push toward apostasy-for-numbers through employing occultic methods of Word of Faith, Neo-Calvinist/Signs and Wonders, Kingdom Now, as well as contemplative/meditative and mystical techniques like Lecto-Divina.

Some promote false teachings and unholy lifestyles through popular formats, music, media and various unscriptural messages to draw multitudes away from the Bible to follow them with unquestioning dedication. Many of these pay homage to the Pope, or promote the latest vision or trendy teaching. The whole trend of the latter days is seen in these efforts to redefine and actually exchange true worship and doctrine for false. This would bring multitudes under bondage and dependency of man and turn them away from the one true God and the Word of God. The spirit of antichrist is definitely influencing the latter day church. This should be a warning to the watchful, that the coming of the Lord to rapture the true church is drawing near.

The awful reality of the contemporary church is that the teaching on the rapture and Bible prophecy is forbidden by many Christian leaders. Yet we are taught by the Word of God to make the coming of the Lord and the events of the apostasy known to warn Christians of the days in which we live, and to watch for the imminent coming of Jesus Christ for His church: "*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*" (Matthew 24:42).

From the book, Christianity and Anti-Christianity In Their Final Conflict, by Samuel J. Andrews, here are some of the key beliefs of early church fathers concerning the characteristics of the antichrist:

1. That before the end of the world or age, there would be an apostasy, which in its culmination would be not merely a corruption of the Christian faith, but a total denial of it; an apostasy not universal, but very general.
2. That the last representative and leader of this apostasy would be a man, "the man of sin," "the wicked one," "the son of perdition," "the Antichrist."
3. That this man would attain to universal dominion, all nations becoming subject to him.
4. That this dominion would continue but a short time, forty-two months, or three and a half years.
5. That he would claim divine honors for himself, and persecute all upholding the faith of Christ, and suppress, as far as possible, all Christian worship.
6. That the time immediately preceding and during his reign would be one of great tribulation.
7. That many of the Jews would receive him as their Messiah.
8. That he would be destroyed with his adherents by the Lord at His appearing.

We will look more into the current indicators of the coming of the Lord and of the rise of the Antichrist in future editions of *Prophecy In Perspective*.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"

Titus 2:13

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