

ANTICHRIST

By Kenneth Fortier

PART ONE

Antichrist gets quite a lot of publicity these days. Religious radio and television programs are saturated with references about him. In fact, a few motion pictures have even been made with him as the main character — and more are in the works for the sensation loving ones among us. More books are currently being written about him than on any other subject. During a recent visit to a religious bookstore in my area, I was confronted with a whole section of shelves given over to books on the “end times,” and almost every single one I paged through had much to say on the “antichrist.” Would you believe that I counted over 50 different titles? It’s true. In fact, I have in my possession over 30 different books on the subject, and of them, only a couple that was on that bookstore’s shelf. That makes over 75 different titles that I know of, and there are many more in the works by different authors.

What are we to think? The common conception all these religious shows and books picture is that “antichrist” will be one lone super-individual, a super-politician who is always “about to appear” in the near future. He is pictured having fantastic power at his control. Armies equipped with tanks, Jet planes, rockets, bombs, etc., and some of these books picture his army mounted on horses — just to conform to what they call a literal reading of Scriptures. He is pictured as having a vast computer system to keep track of all people under his control. This computer supposedly identifies the individual by a mark, visible or invisible, imprinted upon the forehead or the hand of those destined for hell. This is the mark of the beast — 666. Three and a half to 7 years of his rule will be such as to literally cause all manner of hell to break loose on this “Late Great Planet Earth.” But, he will meet his match when Christ returns to defeat him with a two-edged sword coming out of his mouth — and that, yes; will be accomplished at the famous battle of Armageddon!

But, as if all these things aren’t enough, they have the return of Christ taking place in two stages. One is visible and the other “invisible.” To top that off, they present a teaching of more than one resurrection! In fact, to read of all the resurrections mentioned in these books a person can very well wonder if they have some inside information not available in the Bible. This is actually preposterous. What says the Christ? Or don’t these writers believe what the Scriptures say he said?

Many have written and asked questions on Christ’s return. It fills my heart with joy to see some concerned about this. But, sadly, I find that it is not with Jesus, but with antichrist that they seek to know about. This is all well and good, for the writers of Scripture tell us to be aware of antichrists, who, with Satan, the great deceiver behind them, lead multitudes down the broad road that leads to destruction. In this series of articles we will attempt to show what the Scriptures have to say about some of these things; most importantly, the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are sure you will be surprised with some of what we write.

Antichrist is a subject that intrigues a person to no end. It conjures up a vision that lets one's imagination run wild. Many have put what their imaginations have worked up into books, saying that Scriptures reveal just what they have imagined. In this way they make the Scriptures say what they dreamed. Are we to believe all these theories floating around about the "end times?" This writer doesn't believe so. To show you what is said by all these theories taught as gospel, comparing them with the Scriptures for verification is to show you how the minds of men are capable of deceiving the unwary. All of these books on the market are worth reading, for it is the only way that one can see what another person thinks. Many are very interesting, being best sellers because of the sensationalism expressed in terms of suspense and drama. The books I am talking about are the ones written in the always "around-the-corner" futuristic sense.

This futuristic school of prophetic interpretation, in no small measure, has been responsible for the success which has led the modern onslaught on the credibility of the prophecies of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. The philosophers of that narrow school of thought, however, imagine themselves to be the only real defenders of Holy writ. The origin of that school may be traced back to Francisco Ribera, a distinguished Jesuit expositor (1537–91 AD), who published a 500 page commentary in 1585 on the prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse. Ribera's commentary laid the foundation for the futuristic expansion of the prophecies in the Bible.

Following Ribera was Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), an Italian Cardinal and Jesuit controversialist, who promoted Ribera's thesis. Another Jesuit by the name of Emanuel de Lacunza (1731–1801), further expanded his predecessors' teachings and was very instrumental in helping such men as Dr. Samuel Maitland, the curator to the Archbishop of Canterbury in England and Edward Irving of the Plymouth Brethren Church to introduce these futuristic views into the non-Catholic world.

These futuristic views of prophecy, as were to be expected, were soon bought by the theologians of the "High Church" (In England), and were eventually caught up by the "Plymouth Brethren." The "Brethren" leaders started this futuristic trend among modern day expositors. Most of these leaders wrote on prophecy, and all more or less in support of these futuristic views. These men were the start, and were continued in the USA by John Nelson Darby's extensive travel to the States and Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, the author and publisher of the Scofield Study Bible. The history is fantastic, to say the least.

One of these futuristic views we are going to look at in this article, the "rapture," has a very interesting origin. A person can search every history book all the way back to the time of Christ and not find one solitary reference to a "secret pre-tribulation rapture," that is, until around the year 1830. How, then, did this teaching start? In 1828, a woman by the name of Margaret McDonald, in a trance, gave a prophecy in which she spoke of the visible, open, and glorious coming of Christ. But as the utterance continued, she expanded her vision and began to speak of ANOTHER coming of Christ. This was a secret coming in which Christ would come and rapture those who were truly ready and looking for his return. Those who were left would have to go through the tribulation times mentioned in the Scriptures.

From this "utterance" spoken in Edward Irving's church, the modern teaching that there would be a separate secret coming to rapture all those that were ready was soon to be dogmatically promoted as though it had always been the eternal truth of the most Holy Scriptures. From this, a man by the name of John Nelson Darby of London, England, set

forth the format for futuristic writers. He wrote much on what was first started by Ribera — over 30 volumes of 600 pages each! He became the “father” of the modern “dispensationalism” pervading futuristic writings. If Darby was the father, Cyrus Ingerson Scofield was his son. Scofield became the strongest promoter of the teaching that had been formulated by Darby, whom he considered “the most profound Bible student of modern times.” It was this teaching which was incorporated into the notes of his “*Scofield Reference Bible*.” These “notes” are more commentary than expository in nature. The format is that of Darby who used the thoughts and teachings of the Jesuit Ribera.

By our bringing up these things, it is not our purpose to cast any reflection upon the sincerity of these people. Many of these stood for the fundamentals of Christianity. In the notes of Scofield there is some good material, but we reject the notes on prophecy, for they present a view which, we feel, is unscriptural and which is of comparatively recent origin, and not traceable back to anyone other than whom we have mentioned. With all due respect to those who hold this dispensationalist teaching concerning the Second Coming of Christ (some of our best friends included among them), we must say that it is our sincere conviction that the pre-tribulation teaching they bring out sadly lacks a solid Scriptural foundation. It is a theory based on imaginations gone wild.

One of the topics hitting us from all direction today — on the radio, television, books, and even Motion Pictures — is that the church, which includes all Christians, is to be, yes “raptured” out of this world before the Antichrist is to be revealed. This is the subject of this article.

Before we begin, let me say that the mystery concerning the return of Jesus is plainly spelled out in the Scriptures. It is spelled out so plainly that those who pride themselves on their education, their standing in the church, their pious words and actions cannot see it: yet the very least and un-educated among us can understand. For as Jesus said in a prayer to His Father: “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to infants” (Matthew 11:25). The word translated as “infants” does not mean a literal baby child, but one who is not “wise and learned.” Your Bible may have it translated as “little ones.”

The reason for this article is two-fold. First, it is to show our readers some plain things revealed by our Lord and his writers of Scripture. Secondly, it is to expose a teaching started around 1826–30 upon which these futuristic books and religious programs unconsciously turn our eyes away from Antichrist and his kingdom. Those who advocate futuristic systems are pleasing the Antichrist and are playing into the hands of his backer, Satan.

The Rapture: When?

Those who hold to what is called the “dispensational” interpretation of Scriptures teach that the Second Advent of Jesus will be in TWO separate stages: 1) the “rapture”, Jesus coming FOR the saints, both the dead and the ones then living, and 2) the “revelation”, Jesus coming WITH the saints he had previously raptured, but not before 3 ½ to 7 years later.

The reasons for this time span are many, but the main one is so that a future Antichrist can rise up, do his dastardly deeds, and bring on what is called the “Great

Tribulation.” At the close of this tribulation period, these futuristic views say that Christ will return in power and glory with his “raptured” saints: “Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him” (Revelation 1:7); this refers to the 2nd stage, the “revelation” (or so they teach). The “rapture,” on the other hand, is constantly portrayed as a quiet, *invisible*, and highly *secret* affair. Let me quote these amazing statements:

“Quickly and *invisibly*, unperceived by the world, the Lord will come as a thief in the night and catch away his waiting saints” (J. F. Silver, *The Lord’s Return*, page 260).

“His appearance in the clouds will be *veiled* to the human eye and *no one will see him*. He will slip in, slip out; move in to get his jewels (believers) and slip out as under cover of night” (Oral Roberts, *How to be Personally Prepared For The Second Coming of Christ*, page 34).

“It (the rapture) will be a *secret* appearing, and only the believers will know about it” (H. W. Ford, *Seven Simple Sermons On The Second Coming Of Christ*, page 34).

“It will be a *secret* rapture—*quiet, noiseless, sudden* as the step of the thief in the night. All that the world will know will be that multitudes at once have gone” (G. S. Bishop, *The Doctrine of Grace*, page 341).

Notice the emphasized words! Every one of these writers I have just quoted says that this teaching is plainly taught in the Bible. Hundreds more could have been quoted saying the same things. But do the Scriptures really teach that the rapture will be a *secret, invisible, or a quiet event*? Let’s look at the only verse of Scripture that plainly pertains to the “rapture”; a “catching up” into the air to meet the Lord Jesus when he returns.

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a *loud command*, with the *voice of the archangel* and with the *trumpet call* of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up (raptured) with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

To me, and anyone really reading these two verses, it indicates anything but a quiet, secret rapture! It makes no difference if you take the words emphasized in a figurative or literal meaning, for either way, this passage *does not convey any idea of a secret and quiet event*! If anything, it indicates that the Lord’s coming will be a *loud, noisy, open and wonderful event*. Nevertheless, in spite of its plain import, this verse is constantly referred to and used as a text for emotional sermons in both books and media programs to describe the rapture as a secret, hidden, and quiet coming of the Lord.

What makes these men (and women) think that the rapture will be quiet and secret? Oh, I see, Jesus said he would come “as a thief in the night.” Yes, the Apostle Peter tells us that the day of the Lord will come, and we will be caught up (raptured). We do not know when, however, for, as Peter said, “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;” (2 Peter 3:10a). But let’s not let any man deceive us by quoting this from Peter’s letter, for Peter does not mean that this event will be quiet or secret. Let’s let Peter explain more fully what he was trying to get across:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (The words, “in the night,” do not appear in the letter from Peter).

I believe the Lord Jesus will return and rapture those who are alive at his Second Coming. I also echo the words of the Apostle John: “Even so, come Lord Jesus!” I am ready and willing to be “caught up”: and at *any and all times* — it is my “blessed hope!” I also know *when* Jesus is returning; ***at the end of the world***, which, as Peter said, is the last age for mankind — and we are in it **now!**

“Since everything will be destroyed in this way (verse 10 mentioned above), what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the *day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat* ... Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the errors of lawless men and fall from your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever” (2 Peter 3:11–12, 17–18).

Peter’s words are a great encouragement to me, and should be to you also. What is said by Peter should put to rest all that is said by these futuristic sensationalists with their many and varied theories on Christ at the Second Coming. Christ will not come in two stages! He came the first time over 1900 years ago. His Second Advent will be at the end of the world! He said so! And, if anything, his words should be final, regardless of what you read in books, hear on the radio, or the television, or in sermons, or see in motion pictures. Let’s hear and heed what Jesus said.

In the book of Matthew, Jesus made it very clear that we believers would not be taken out of the world before all the unbelievers. He spoke a parable about “a man who sowed good seed in his field,” and while he slept, “his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat.” When the crop had grown, the servants saw what had happened. “So the servants of the household came and said, “Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the tares come from? ... Do you want us to go and pull them up? But he said, no, because while you are pulling the tares, you might root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: **First**

collect the tares and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn” (Matthew 13:24–30).

It is interesting to read that C. I. Scofield, in his reference Bible has a footnote, page 1016, referencing this parable given by Jesus, and contradicts Jesus’ words to say that “At the end of the age, the tares are set apart for burning, but **first**, the wheat is gathered into the barn.” Scofield is commenting on the parable and instead of reading further on when Jesus himself explained the parable, he got it all wrong. Scofield was a great admirer of Darby’s work and was committed to spreading the dispensational view and make it the prevailing view of Christianity. Millions of people were “caught up” in this un-scriptural teaching and literally hundreds of books followed suit.

We are not left to speculate as to the meaning of this parable, for Jesus himself gave us the interpretation. The “good seed,” the wheat, is sown by the “Son of Man”—Jesus, the Christ of God. The tares, “the children of the wicked one,” are sown by the enemy, “the devil.” They are planted in the same field, “the world,” where they both grow together until the harvest. And when will this harvest take place? “The harvest is the end of the world” (Matthew 13:37–39). **Read this!**

“As the tares are pulled up and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where they will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **Then** the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:40–43).

It is very plain that the time of separation of the good and the bad will occur at the end of the world. Jesus himself declared this! This is the teaching of all the Scriptures. There is **no secret, invisible, silent rapture** ever mentioned in the whole of the Bible. Do not be deceived. Don’t be carried away with the teachings of the “End Time Prophets” of today. This teaching produced many cults, such as the Jehovah Witnesses and many others. Even Christians have been “caught up” (raptured) into these theories. Satan must love it, for it turns the minds of men away from his “protégé” — the Antichrist, and causes them to think of him as a person to be revealed only after they are raptured out of this world. Oh, what a deception! “What a tangled web they weave, when they set first to deceive.”

Will the saints be “raptured” out of this world before the Antichrist is revealed? These futuristic disciples say yes, but the Apostle Paul says no. Who should we believe? Hall Lindsey of “*The Late Great Planet Earth*” fame? Oral Roberts, who tells us “*How to be Personally Prepared for the Second Coming of Christ?*” Tim LaHaye and his partner in their “*Left Behind*” series of books along with the movies made from them? How about the Apostle Paul for a change?

“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him ... Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the *falling away comes*

first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the one doomed to destruction” (2 Thessalonians 2:1–3).

Notice the TWO things Paul said Christians will witness FIRST. 1) An apostasy — a falling away from the truths of the Gospel, and 2) A revealing of the “man of sin,” an “antichrist” (*if we may use that term here*), which most people will not recognize because they think we must be raptured out of the world before he is revealed; and which thought Satan must love — for it turns the eyes and minds of the people off of his protégé.

No, there is no “rapture” that is going to keep people from the great tribulation Christians have gone through, are going through, and will go through. The “rapture” will occur at the end of this age and is the means God will use to transport us to be where our Savior is. Even the dead “in Christ” will be raptured as they are resurrected from the dust of this old earth of ours. It will be a very noisy and glorious affair. This earth will melt and dissolve with the judgment of fire that God had promised would happen. You can count on it!

PART TWO

Antichrist is a title or name that very few people really know anything about. Since the year 1585 AD, people have been told that the term, “*antichristos*,” refers to an evil person who will not appear until the last days of the world. If that is true, which most people gullibly accept without any questioning, it is very easy to understand why people are, for the most part, indifferent — not caring one way or the other. But, on the other hand, if that teaching is false, and the term “*antichristos*” does not refer to a super evil person to come in the “always future,” “end times,” it is very possible, NO, it is most probable that the spirit of “*antichristos*” was behind that teaching: with the object of turning the eyes and minds of people away from terms that would point to his deceptive powers and rule. This is much to be regretted.

Who shall we put the blame on? I know! Let’s blame Satan! After all, he is the most logical one who, of all the powers that be, would not want the people to know the true meanings of the “terms” that would identify and point to his servants and the office of his protégé! For the number “two” one to put the blame on, let’s point the finger at ourselves! After all, most of us are indifferent — we have more important things on our little minds: like making money, eating, drinking, and trying to keep up with the Joneses. Yes, the blame should really be put on ourselves, for we are much too caught-up in the things of the world — mainly pride — to pay attention to what God has to tell us in his word. Satan has many of us trapped in his power without us even knowing it. “God, Help us!”

We are now going to look into the meanings of the “terms” spoken of to identify the “antichristos” of Scriptures. For those of you who have written to me asking about this, and for all you who seek the truth, we ask you to follow this article along with your Bible open, reading the context of what we bring out into the open. This is the only way in which you can see if we speak the truth or not. It is also the only way to “check out” if what others say is the “whole truth,” or if they have made their opinions take the “truths” place.

“COME, LET US REASON TOGETHER, SAID THE LORD.”

Think on this for a start (read Matthew 16:21–26). Jesus had just complimented Peter for realizing that he was the Christ promised by the Father (vs. 17). Then, in verse 20, Jesus told the Apostles not to tell anyone who he was. Now comes the point in time in which Jesus started to explain, in very plain words, that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the Jewish leaders. Yes, Jesus told his Apostles that he must be killed and on the third day be raised back to life (vs. 21). But Peter would not have any of that happen, so he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him (to “rebuke” is to give a sharp and pointed disapproval, a reprimand or bawling out!). “Perish the thought, Lord! That shall never happen to you!” (NIV, vs. 22).

Hear Jesus’ reply! “Out of my sight, Satan! You are an offence to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” (vs. 23). Just think, Jesus had just complimented Peter on his confession, and now calls him Satan! WHY? Very simple, Peter was more concerned about keeping Jesus alive than he was in letting God work his greatest of all signs — Christ’s resurrection! His mind was all caught-up in preserving the status-quo — “Things are going great! Why not leave well enough alone?”

In verses 24 through 26 Jesus teaches some very important things. If anyone wants to be a follower of Christ, and be called a Christian, he must lose his life and be reborn; a thing that Jesus had also told Nicodemus (See John 3:1–21). Does that sound impossible? Remember, “with God nothing is impossible.” Oh, how I wish the leaders in local assemblies of Christians would come right out and warn the people how to deny themselves, carry their cross, and lose their lives for Christ’s name, being born anew with the spirit from above! “Woe unto those hypocrites! Outside they are like white-washed grave-stones, but inside are like dead man’s bones!” They will answer to God at the end! You can count on that! I’m speaking of the Pharisees of Jesus’ time, and that also applies to leaders today.

Why have I brought this up for you to think upon? Well, if Jesus called Peter Satan, what would he call those of us who spend all our thoughts on worldly things and seek not to know the things of God? Did not Peter repent, that is, change ones mind towards God? I am sure he did: for doesn’t he say eight times in his letter to us to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”? Think on this: Are you interested in really finding out what God has revealed to us about his antagonist, Satan, and Satan’s way of deception? Are you truly seeking the things God has said, or would you rather be content to let someone else care for your life? Satan would love to “baby-sit” your soul. “Do not worry about those who can kill your body; worry about him who can destroy both your body and being in Gehenna” (Matthew 10:28).

In writing this article, we have rigidly shunned the flights of fancy and theories so pronounced today, and seek to place before our readers FACTS; facts which require only to be examined and compared in the context of Scriptures in order to produce conviction. Christendom today is in such a state as to cause serious alarm to any thinking man. Why? For the simple reason that, owing to a lack of interest and study on the part of the many, and powerful men who influence the many to accept theories and traditions as facts of truth which have absolutely no basis in the truth. “To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word (what is written), it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20).

PART THREE

Antichrist: the meaning of the term

The prevailing cry today is for “fundamentals,” no fancies or theories of men. Many writers deserve special commendation for their loyalty and devotion to the words of God; by which they have sought to open the eyes of men to the truth — the meaning of the “terms” used by the writers of the Scriptures. God raised these men up to do his work of turning people away from the evil one and to his one and only Son, Jesus, all through the centuries past. There are too many of them to even begin mentioning their names. What we bring out in this article is nothing new, for many men raised up at different times by God have said the same things, although in earlier times and in different circumstances. Many of them lost their lives in ways too horrible to mention in this thesis. I too have been threatened because of what I say and put in print. Those who do this to us are not Christians, even though they are members of churches and call themselves Christians — “A good tree brings forth good fruit. A bad tree brings forth bad fruit...thus, by their fruit you will recognize them” (Matthew 7:15–21). The first article on this topic brought out the topic Jesus spoke about on the “Tares and the Wheat.” Both are here in the world and in the church until the end of the world.

In this article we are going to be mentioning some Greek words used by the writers of the Scriptures. Don’t be disturbed. You do not have to be a Greek Scholar to understand the difference in the words used. We do not bring them up to impress anyone, but for reasons which you will see. We hope to make it plain enough so that anyone with a high-school education can understand. We pray that you read the context from which we bring out the meanings as they are mentioned. The first principle we want to impress upon you is this:

*To prove anything from one or two verses of Holy Scripture, out of the context it is taken from, is to take a doctrine of man and put it forth as coming from God!
(We shun that!)*

Another thing we want to show you was well stated by someone else, so we quote him here, and in many other places. (B. A. Porcelli di S. Andrea of Palermo, Italy, circa 18th century.)

“In order to ascertain the nature of ‘the Antichrist’ it is essential to be cautious in our dealings with Scripture phraseology, and to remember that, whereas we are accustomed to Western modes of thought, the Bible writers were not so. They were all Orientals, and the languages employed by them — viz., the Hebrew and Greek — did not, and still do not, lend themselves completely to modern Western terminology. The very word ‘antichrist’ is a manufactured one, unknown to Hebrew usage, and has no corresponding equivalent in the Anglo-Saxon dialect [or in American English, Ed]. It is wrong, therefore, to jump to the conclusion that the mere sound of the word denotes its meaning. That is by no means the case. The true sense has to be discovered by careful study of: a) the context in which it is used; b) the parallel passages — if any — in

corresponding terms, and in corresponding predictions; c) similar Oriental terms in classical and Biblical writings.”

In this article we will follow these three points, for it is the only way possible to find out what the true meaning of the word “antichristos” is, as used by the Apostle John.

Let’s now turn to the writings of the Apostle John, for it is only he who uses the word “antichrist” — a word he had to have coined, for it appears in no earlier writings of antiquity. John used it in only four verses, and as used by him, is applied to many persons existing in the first century! It is NOT confined to pertain to a single, “futuristic” individual to appear in the far distant future. Here are the four verses:

1. (1 John 2:18)

“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.”

2. (1 John 2:22)

“Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist — the one denying the Father and the Son.”

3. (1 John 4:3)

“... But every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is in the world.”

4. (2 John 7)

“Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.”

There, you have every verse that mentions “antichrist” and “the antichrist”! In the Greek the words appear as “o antichristos” (the antichrist) and “antichristos” (antichrist). Do you think that you could write even one of the multitudes of books men have written on these four simple verses? Sure you could. All you would have to have is a vivid imagination and the ability to use a lot of adjectives. Of course, you would not be able to stick to the context of the verses you drew out, for that wouldn’t sell many books. You would have to write suspense and drama, enticing the reader to use his own imagination to see what you are getting at. You would have to appeal to man’s want of the sensational. You would have to appeal to man’s want of the things to explain away the evil inherent in this world. You would have to keep all your remarks in the futuristic sense, for you would not want your readers to say you are wrong in what you bring out from the Scriptures.

Let’s now look at what John said in these four verses, and we will use the three points previously mentioned by Baron Porcelli so that we do not get carried away with the spirit of the world as many have done; and we will use a good amount of his argument in so doing!

A. The context

We find in reading the context of what the Apostle John wrote, many words describing the antichrist(s). Notice also that his use of the term — both singular and plural — is applied to a certain class or type of people. Just who were these people? Were they to be “political” adversaries like Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin? Absolutely not. Were they “Atheists?” Again, absolutely not. The people that John called antichrist were *apostates* — those who *professed* to be Christians but who *denied* the Lord by following the *false teachings* that were creeping into the various congregations. This is why John wrote his letters and his rendition of the Good News of Jesus Christ. They were written to Christians warning them to hold to the original faith as taught by the Apostles at the beginning. They were warned not to be deceived by new and novel teaching being introduced by certain leaders in the church. It is very important that you read the complete letters from John to see the context — don’t just read the passages the verses mentioned are taken from. Note how John stressed that we are to hold fast to that which had been proclaimed from the very beginning!

Pay attention to the emphasis place on certain words in what follows in the next paragraph which is taken from the 1st and 2nd letters of John:

“That which was *from the beginning*, which we *have heard* (from Christ) ... we declare unto you ... this then is the message which we have *heard from him*, and declare unto you” (1 John 1:1, 3, 5). Notice: John speaks of the instruction they “*had from the beginning*” and the word which they “*had heard from the beginning*” (2:7). “See that what you have *heard from the beginning* remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father” (2:24). “This is the message you *heard from the beginning*” (3:11). In John’s 2nd letter he mentions: “I am not writing you a new command, but one we have had *from the beginning*” (2 John 5), and, “as you have *heard from the beginning*” (2 John 6).

Re-read the four references to “antichrist” previously set in front of you. Observe the differences in the tenses, shown by the words, “is coming” and “have come” (1 John 2:18). In the Greek these two words are “*erchomenon*”—meaning “still to come,” and “*eleeluthota*”—meaning “already come.” And notice that the word “antichrist” is not prefixed with the word “*o*” which means “the” in the first reference. It is used as a ***descriptive title*** and not as a singular person. It is the Greek term “*antichristos*”, not “*o antichristos*” — the antichrist. The reason I bring out the Greek words is so that you can see that they are different — this is not the same meaning in both places. You do not have to be a Greek Scholar to notice the application — you can see it, even if you cannot read it in the original Greek language.

In the second reference (1 John 2:22), observe: “Who is the liar?” John answers his own question with “Such a man is the antichrist” (*antichristos*), and then tells us why he is a liar—he denies! The word “deny” used by John is the Greek term “*arnoumenos*” which literally means “*the one refusing*,” and in no sense implies “atheism” or the denial of the existence of God. The word simply signifies a “departure from” the truth, and is so used constantly in both the New Testament and the Septuagint Scriptures (the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures). Pay particular attention to the fact that John puts the title of “the antichrist” to anyone who “denies” that Jesus is the Christ who “came” in the flesh, and “is coming” again “in the flesh!”

The third reference (1 John 4:3) reveals to us that the “spirit of the antichrist” which his readers had “heard is coming,” is “even now” present — in the first century! Again, in context, note that “the antichrist,” one who “denies,” has followers — at least in the spirit, if not physically — for the ones who do not “acknowledge” (the word is the same as “confess”) Jesus are said to have the “spirit of antichrist.”

But, now watch this: In the fourth reference, which is very similar to the third, and occurring in John’s second letter, he magnifies his description of “the antichrist,” calling him (not in the sense of a singular person, but to anyone qualifying) “the deceiver.” So, an antichrist is anyone who “does not acknowledge” (a verbal confession) “that Jesus has come in the flesh” in his teachings, or that he “is coming” again “*in the flesh*.” (See Heb. 9:28)

In reading the complete first and second letters of John, I want you to observe very carefully that the description of “the antichrist” is defined as being a “liar” and “deceiver.” That “spirit of antichrist” was already in the world — along with many antichrists — when the Apostles were spreading the Good News of Christ. It is therefore very wrong and mistaken to look for, or to suspect, a futuristic spirit and to name him as “the antichrist.” We can be very safe in our saying that “the spirit of antichrist denies the true humanity of Jesus Christ, for it does not confess that he already came in the flesh, and is coming again in the flesh. By doing so, they are liars and deceivers and antichrists. There were many such ones in John’s day and will be in every day to the end of time.” And they call themselves Christians!

The context of John’s testimony does not support the idea of one unique individual personality to only appear in the “last days,” or of an “Atheist”—as so many picture him in the many books and media programs of today, not to mention the many modern churches that preach on the coming of a future “antichrist” seven years before Christ returns in glory. To the contrary, John says of the antichrists (plural) of his day: “They went out from us” — that is, they were Christian apostates (those who defected from the truth delivered from the beginning), who held false views of the truth. Those false views are explained by John: “**Anyone who goes beyond and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God: the one remaining in the teaching has both the Father and the Son**” (2 John 9). To “**go beyond**” the limits of Christ’s teaching, in regard to his testimony, is a “**denial**” of God, whereas, to continue in what Christ taught is to remain loyal to both the Father and the Son — who is Jesus the Christ.

Seeing as how Jesus repeatedly taught that he is the “Son of Man,” as well as the “Son of God,” and that, as the “Son of Man,” he will once again return to this world, “in the flesh,” anyone who propounds views contradictory or opposed to that teaching is a “liar,” a “deceiver,” and is an “antichrist.” (See Matthew 25:13, 20:18, 16:27; John 3:13, 6:62, and 5:25).

B. Parallel Passages

John said that those he wrote to “*had heard*” such persons (antichrists) would appear on earth (1 John 2:18). From a report quoted by Papias, a student of the Apostle John, we are quite certain that John knew of the letters written by Peter and Paul: Peter had said, “But there were also false prophets among the people (Jews), just as there will be false teachers among you (Christians), who will “secretly bring in” (a single

expression in the Greek indicating the “introduction of things by subterfuge”) opinions of destruction (an expression in the Greek indicating, in the context of what is said, “an erroneous belief”), even “denying (again, a refusing) the Lord that had bought them (by his crucifixion)” (2 Peter 2:1).

The Apostle Paul amplified this by saying that “some shall depart (abandon) the faith, following misleading spirits and hypocritical liars whose consciences have been seared as with a branding iron. *They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods*” (1 Tim. 4:1–3).

Like John, Paul also said and warned his readers to “take heed to the teachings; continue in them” (1 Tim. 4:16) — that is, they were *not to go beyond* the revealed teachings and introduce anything new; not to depart and wander away from “*what is taught*.” In 2 Tim. 3:13, Paul said, “seducers” from the faith are *deceivers*, just as we see from John’s letters that deceivers are also connected with *liars* and are called *antichrists*.

It is very clear from reading the writings of Peter, Paul, and John, that any additions or subtractions from the teachings taught by them, and involving “denial” of the Lord Jesus as the Christ, is *falsehood, deception, and anti-Christianity*. One who “denies,” as John so aptly pointed out, is a “liar,” the “deceiver,” and is truly “the antichrist.” John singles out as deception, any form of teaching that transgresses or overrides the basic facts of our Lord’s humanity and that transgression is a rejection of both the Father and the Son. This basic fact is that Jesus was “**God made known in the flesh**” (1 Timothy 3:16).

A conclusion that you, the reader, should be able to reach by yourself, is that John undoubtedly had in mind the Gospel which he had written before, in which he had laid down the truths that “The word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14, also see Matthew 1:23). From your reading you should also be able to plainly see that men, who, in any way, “deny” the truth, are liars, deceivers and antichrists; and that it is very evident the “spirit of antichrist” is that which fosters or holds teachings that are **opposed to the revealed truths**. The “spirit of antichrist” is a spirit of falsehood and deceit; a departure from truth, an apostasy — not of Atheism, but of Christianity.

It is enough to abide **not** in the teachings of Christ, to be without God. It is enough to **not** confess the real humanity of Jesus, to be without God. It is enough to **not** confess that Jesus is the Christ who is coming once again in the flesh, to be the antichrist, and be without God. (See 2 John 9, 1 John 4:3, and 2 John 7.)

Antichrist is “the deceiver.” Antichrist is not an Atheist. There is no need, therefore, according to Jesus, Peter, Paul and John, to look for antichrist as someone who does not profess to be a Christian. Atheism is an avowed, open denunciation of, not only Christ, but God. But, and please understand this, the “mystery of iniquity” has behind it all the marks of Satan: it is of a lie, a deceit, and ingenious, wily, crafty, sly introduction of false teachings. The Apostle Paul let’s us plainly know that “the man of sin,” “the lawless one,” is according to the powers of Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:9), who poses as “an angel of light,” utilizing “false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ” and “ministers of righteousness” (2 Corinthians 9:13, 14, 15).

You should realize by reading the Bible, that as “god of this age,” Satan “blinds the mind” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and causes men to “corrupt the word” with “deception” (2 Corinthians 4:2), and in doing so, hides the true Gospel message of Christ, which alone is the “power of God unto Salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

In the New Testament there is not one single apostolic or prophetic reason to believe in any other form of antichrist than what is portrayed by Peter, Paul and John; which is not of an atheist, but is plainly portrayed as a crafty, pseudo-Christian, apostate, lying, deceitful system of religion endowed with satanic power, who handles the word of God to suit themselves: such is the picture portrayed by the Apostles!

Space does not allow us to amplify the portrait of Antichrist(s) with all that is spoken in the Old Testament prophecies or the Apocalypse (the Revelation of Jesus to John) as “parallel passages.” But, we do give you this to think about: In the Revelation of Jesus to John, the antichrist (if we may use this word) is from the abyss (Revelation 11:7, 13:7, 17:8); is an enemy to true Christian witnesses with whom it makes war; and that it goes into “perdition;” which identifies it with Paul’s “son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The term “perdition” connects not only with Paul’s description but connects also with the false apostle, Judas Iscariot, who was given that designation by John himself (John 17:12). We shall be “wise” (See Daniel 12:3, 10) if we understand this hint, and which indicates that Judas was a type of the Antichrist. So, therefore, we should look for a false apostle, and not some Atheist, as is so un-biblically taught by so many today.

It is amazing that in Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 22, 9:36–39, and in Revelation 13:3–8 and 15–18, that it (antichrist, if we may use the term) is pictured as a “little horn” speaking “great words” and making “war with the saints” for a long length of time; and has a “mouth speaking blasphemies against God, his name, his temple, and them that dwell in heaven; a “little horn,” which is also a “king” and a kingdom that “exalts himself (just as Paul’s “son of perdition” does) above everything called God,” and magnifies himself “above all,” using “gold, silver and precious stones and pleasant things” in honor of his god, just as in Revelations 17:4 and 18:12, his church is represented as doing. Pay attention to the fact that this “little horn” or “king” is a “head” (Revelation 13:3, 17:9–11) of the well-known symbol of the Lateinos (Greek spelling of Latina) power, for always in prophecy is a wild beast portrayed as a gentile pagan power.

C. Classical and Biblical Usage of: “Anti”

The last part of this article is written to show you the true meaning of the Greek word “anti.” We ask you to think upon what is shown, and to come to your own conclusions.

“ANTI” and the word “CHRIST” make up the word ANTICHRIST. That is not hard to see. But, is it self-explanatory? Many people are of the belief that “anti” means strictly one who is “against” or “opposed” to Christ, but by that they would never be able to recognize one; for there have been, are, and will always be, millions who are “against” or “opposed” to Christ. The Apostle Paul, before he was converted, was vehemently “against” and “opposed” to Christ. Was he an “antichrist?” No. he was an open enemy — not an antichrist! The Jews, pagans, Islamists, and members of non-Christian religions are all “against” or “opposed” to Christ. Are they “antichrists?” Again I say, **absolutely not**. They are unbelievers. Well, then, just who is an Antichrist? Let’s see.

When the Apostle John spoke of antichrists, he spoke of a certain group of people, and never referred to all “opposed” to Christ as antichrists. Instead, he referred to “apostates” who taught views contrary to the true original teachings taught and preached *from the beginning*. These people were not openly against Jesus Christ. They were

professing Christians who were liars and deceivers, and who introduced false teachings into Christianity by subterfuge; an act which is not immediately recognized, but slowly pervades, and in this case, the teachings of Christ *heard from the beginning*, so that those following these liars and deceivers are tricked into believing a lie.

It is said that a “picture is worth a thousand words,” so let us attempt to draw a picture for you: In the beginning pages of this article we brought out the report from Matthew in which Peter was called Satan by Christ Jesus. Now we all agree, I’m sure, that Satan is “against” or “opposed” to the Christ from God. Is he the “Antichrist?” In this report, we see Jesus call Peter “Satan”. We also see that Peter was also “against” or “opposed” to the idea of Jesus’ going to Jerusalem to be killed. It was this “opposition” which prompted Jesus to call Peter Satan. Was Peter of the “spirit of the Antichrist,” or of Satan? Remember, Peter had just confessed that “Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Now read those four references from John again. Was Peter an “Antichrist?” Was Peter of the “spirit of the Antichrist?” I can say “**absolutely not!**” Note: “Satanas” in the Greek means an “adversary.”

From this, put out of your mind the idea that “anti” means “against” or “opposed” to Christ. **This is not the real and true meaning of the word.** You may disagree on this, but the word “against” means “opposed”—and is a characteristic of John’s Antichrist, but not openly. You see, Antichrist is one who operates by deception, and is a liar and hypocrite and false teacher — Peter was none of these.

Here is an excellent “picture” for you to see the meaning of the word “anti” as used in the Greek by the Apostle John. In the *Chronicle of Zachariah of Mytilene* (6th Century AD), Chapter One, part one (Burry’s Byzantine Texts), it is reported:

“King Justin made his sister’s son, who was General, **Anti**Caesar, and Justinian became **Anti**Caesar on the 5th day of the week in the last week of the fast.”

I must make this point for you to understand the application: King Justin was Caesar. Only a direct descendant of the King, that is, a son of the King, could be the next in line to be King, or in this case, Caesar. A son of the King’s sister is not a direct claimant to the throne of Caesar. He has a father outside of the blood-line, and by that, did not qualify to take the seat of the King as a true King.

AntiCaesar is one who sat on the same throne as the real claimant; taking his place; giving commands as Caesar; taking the honor as Caesar; and could say: “What was said of Caesar may well seem verified in me. I have the authority of being King and Caesar. I am above all, so that Caesar and I, the Vicar of Caesar, have but one consistory, and I am able to do all that Caesar can do. What therefore, can you make of me but Caesar?”

In the paragraph above, change the word “AntiCaesar” to read “AntiChrist” and the word “Caesar” to read “Christ:” now re-read it. Do you now see how the word “anti” was applied by the Apostle John, and how it was used by the Greeks during New Testament times and for 1700 years after?

The **Anti**Caesar, Justinian, was “opposed” or “against” the real Caesar, but yet was not! He was only a usurper, a vice-Caesar, a false claimant, a vicar of Caesar. He was a substitute, “**in the stead of,**” and as such, was rivalry and hostility to the true

claimant of the throne of Caesar. The true use and meaning of “anti” is thusly shown here. Do you see and understand that? If not, read it over again!

Another “picture,” which is also excellently portrayed because of its force and significance, is furnished by the Roman Catholic Church’s use of the Greek word “**antipapa**”—“**antipope**.” It is an identification given in the sense not simply of an enemy to the Pope, but of a self-substituted, usurping Pope, one occupying the proper Pope’s place, sitting on his chair, receiving all his honors, and exercising all his functions. This is the true application of the Greek word “**anti**” as use in John’s time. Think on that.

This same sense and force of the word “anti” was used by the “church fathers,” whether in reference to the prophecies of Daniel, Paul, Peter or John, or in its secular sense and use. They speak of Christ’s “anti” as a great enemy, but an enemy undercover: an enemy who portrays himself as an “angel of light;” an apostle who is by subterfuge, unperceived as false; a liar who uses the words of God to back up what he says, but with wrong application, deceiving the masses into believing a lie. They picture “antichrist,” not as being an Atheist, but as a usurper of Christ’s place before the church and the world. (See the Greek fathers: Irenaeus, Cyril, Hippolytus, Chrysostom, Theodoret). Two Latin Fathers, Cyprian and Augustine, did not expound on the true force of “anti,” so they speak of antichrist as “an adversary of the Lord” and “opposed to Christ” (in that order). Justin Martyr and Chrysostom use the words “antitheos” — “antigod,” not as a professed rebel against God, but a “usurper of His place,” and get this, by blasphemously proclaiming himself to take the place of God on earth! (Christ is called “emmanuel”, God with us “in the flesh”.)

From this article you should be able to see some of the characteristics of ANTICHRIST portrayed by Peter, Paul and John. Do not look for him outside of the church, for he is to be within the church as a great and well-recognized leader of Christians; a great deceiver. He is a liar of the most dangerous kind, for he works in a wily way by subterfuge and deception — and is look upon as a godly person, and the servant of Christians. If an “antichrist came boldly, announcing himself as an avowed enemy of Christ, how is he a liar? If he openly avows, not concealing his design of overthrowing Christ, how can he be called a deceiver?

But an antichrist is both a liar and a great deceiver. We speak of him as an individual, but in reality, “he” is a “they;” actually, more of a perpetual person — a succession of antichrists from the time of John, and still with us today. He (they) is now, and is to always be, a counterfeit Christ, not an Atheist. Like Judas who entered the garden to kiss Jesus, and by deceit, betrayed him — so is it with those antichrist’s among us. An antichrist is a false apostle wearing a mask to conceal himself, professing one thing, but undercover acting out the designs of Satan. He leads people down that broad road that leads to destruction. His rule is in a church professing to be Christian. In the book of Revelation, 18:4–5, we read of God calling out to the people who are following these antichrists (if we can use that term to speak of these rulers):

“Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.”

God calls this evil system a “her,” a woman, much as He calls his church a “bride.” God also calls this system a “beast,” and a “prostitute” who has the following written on her forehead: “*Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth.*” Yes, this system of rule is religion that has introduced teachings of demons; a religion that has covertly turned her members to worship idols made by human hands; religion that has many worldly nations bowing down to her and accepting her as a true Christian religion.

NOTE: We have spoken “spiritually” in the last two paragraphs, and do not insist that anyone takes this as Gospel. It isn’t. It is actually “bad news.” There is much we would like to say, but we pull-back because we don’t know for a certainty that what we think is a correct understanding of what the Apostle John really means in the book of Jesus’ revelation to him. We don’t want to add, nor subtract anything from what John wrote, much less put our understanding of the book forth as the absolute truth. What we do know is that Revelations is written in a spiritual sense, and uses much Hebraic expressions and symbols from the Old Testament. Many of the symbols are easy to figure out, but the application is troublesome. Chapter 17 of Revelations does explain quite a bit of the symbolisms John uses, and points out that one with wisdom will understand what is spiritually said. We leave it to you to put your mind to work on this mystery.

Note: If your favorite author, pastor or instructor has been attacked in these three articles, please do not take umbrage. Kindly remember that we have attacked the stand on prophecy only if that stand is an advocate of a future Antichrist to appear and reign for a short 3 ½ to 7 years at the end of this age (whenever that may be); we have not, and do not, question anyone’s stand on the Gospel message or other of any pet sectarian doctrines. We have concerned ourselves only with the false teaching of a FUTURE ANTICHRIST.

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