

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 153

THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH

“And I beheld *another beast coming up out of the earth*; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (Rev. 13:11).

We have discussed the first of two beasts, the beast which came up out of the *sea*. By the spirit of truth we understand that that beast which combined within itself the appearance of a leopard, a bear, and a lion, which had seven heads and ten horns, is the symbol of the BESTIAL WORLD SYSTEM OF MAN. Now we are presented with a second beast! And to prevent any misunderstanding at all, let me say from the outset that there is a definite relation between the first beast and the second beast. The full picture is just this. The second beast rises up out of the *earth*. He is less formidable in appearance. First of all, his origin is not in the depths of the stormy sea, but from the more quiet and more stable earth. He strikes you as looking like a lamb, for he has two horns like lambs' horns, yet when he speaks, he sounds like the awful red dragon. And there is a very definite connection between these two beasts. Repeatedly this is indicated in the description John gives us. He exercises all his authority in the sight of, in the presence of, and even in behalf of the first beast. All that he does he does both in the presence of, and with the approval of, the first beast. Therefore, one of the functions of this second beast is to collaborate with and augment the agenda of the first beast. And this soon becomes apparent! For the second beast causes the inhabitants of the earth-realm to wonder after the first beast, to admire him, and to pay respect and homage (worship) to him. This second beast inspires men to construct an image of the first beast, in order to pay homage to the first beast through his image. The second beast causes all the admirers of the first beast to receive a mark which distinguishes them from those who refuse to worship this beast and his image, in order that they may be killed.

THE ANTICHRIST

Nearly all Fundamentalist, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic teachers have one thing in common when they approach this beast out of the earth; with one voice they identify this beast as the odious, fearful, universally-touted, and long-awaited ANTICHRIST!

Innumerable works have been written, countless sermons have been preached, and myriad tracts have been circulated on the subject of *the antichrist*. The one outstanding feature, however, which attracts one's attention and which must be very perplexing to the average individual, is the confusion which exists, and which characterizes all such efforts. Generally speaking, every scholar has a different doctrine, and every teacher a different understanding of who the antichrist is or will be. And hence, as all the theories cannot be correct, all therefore must be wrong, perhaps with the exception of one.

For years teachers of the Word have been speculating upon the identity of antichrist and the date of his appearance on the world scene. Unfortunately, all these speculations have turned out to be mistakes, which mistakes have to be changed and revised continually to meet changing conditions. It is very humiliating to have world events continually follow a course exactly opposite to that which has been mapped out by one's prophetic teaching, and to have one's predictions proven false almost before the ink is dry on

his paper. The church today is full of energetic and sincere preachers and teachers who are just full and bubbling over concerning things that are going to happen. They tell us that sometime, after certain events have transpired, or before certain other events will happen, there will be a super-deceiver who will arise to show great signs and wonders, gaining political power over all the nations of earth, and ushering in a reign of terror and a time of tribulation unprecedented in the history of the world.

Those of my readers who are well advanced in age remember when the world staggered beneath the weight of the great depression of the 1930's. The planet and all things on it seemed to suddenly fall apart. Thousands of earnest and well-meaning saints believed that this was the certain herald of the end of the age. In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the famous ill-fated N.R.A. (National Recovery Administration) and immediately preachers all over the country got up in their pulpits and preached spellbinding sermons that had their congregations bulging at the eyes in astonishment about the N.R.A. being the Mark of the Beast. Then the Supreme Court tossed the N.R.A. into the scrap basket as unconstitutional, and preachers all over America had to toss their sermons into the waste basket as unscriptural. In the years that followed, as the Second World War heated up, preachers became busy picking men such as Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin as the great antichrist; and indeed they were antichrists, but these tyrants, like so many before them, perished and the world continued on its tremulous course. And preachers all over America had to make trip after trip to the waste basket!

In the days of my youth, one of the first books I seriously studied on prophetic subjects was one setting forth "indisputable proof" that Benito Mussolini was the antichrist! The only problem was that the book came into my hands in the year 1948, and lo, Mussolini had already died a violent death in the streets of Milan, his name was held in disrepute throughout Italy and the world, and his "empire" was dissolved. Years before this, during the First World War, preachers were telling how the Kaiser was the antichrist and was going to upset the world. Then when that failed to materialize, they frittered away much time and wasted much good paper and printer's ink telling us that Mussolini was the one. Then the false prophets declared that Adolph Hitler was surely the man of sin who would come riding into world power on the back of a ten-horned revived Roman Empire. But Hitler's day ended too, a suicide in his bunker beneath the ruins of Berlin. Of course some of these teachers, too ashamed to admit their error, invented all kinds of ingenuous tales to keep the delusion alive, saying that Hitler's death was a "hoax," that he was still alive somewhere in South America, and in due time would reappear on the scene to the astonishment of the whole world, his "deadly wound healed." One thing is certain. He never did reappear, and there is no doubt that he is no longer alive today!

Some students of prophecy, for lack of anything else to speculate on following the Second World War, took up the story of a famous Arabian prince who was represented as having supernatural powers, and who the ignorant and deceived were parading before the perennially gullible as the coming superman. This prince was reported by one well-known evangelist to have created a fabulous golden celestial city in the middle of the desert merely by his spoken word, to have called down fire from heaven, and to have performed a number of other such phenomenal feats. According to the prince's own word, as quoted by this evangelist, he would reveal himself to the world as God and Ruler sometime during the 1960's. He failed to make his appearance. But a friend of mine shared with me how certain saints in California, upon investigation, found that the man who invented the tall tale concerning this Arabian prince was working as a humble clerk in San Francisco, California during the time he was supposed to have been in Arabia as a guest of this prince.

In more recent years we have heard some teaching that Henry Kissinger was the antichrist, or David Rockefeller, or Anwar Sadat, or Mikhail Gorbachev because he had that little birthmark on his head, or Ronald Reagan because he had six letters in his name, or Saddam Hussein because he was from Iraq which is ancient Babylon. They change the antichrist with each political election, with every war, or with the rise of every ruthless dictator who appears to have a global following or threatens our Western way of life. And yet another person stated that she expected him to come from outer space at any minute! One popular writer writes a series of books, which have brought to him an enormous reputation and (be it said) an equally handsome monetary reward, by telling us, almost as though reading the morning newspapers, exactly what is going to happen at any moment now, yet assuring us in the same sentence, and with the same impression of infallibility, that it really does not concern the church anyway — we shall be safely away in heaven before

the events of his books begin to come to pass! “*O, my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err*” (Isa. 3:12; 9:16). But we now know the answer to all these predictions. They were nothing more than the presumptuous guesses of idle shepherds who were destitute of truth. And the unbelievable reality is that many Christians are so gullible and so susceptible to this kind of sensational trash, that they have no better sense than to glory in it, even though the statements are proven false, one after another, by the actual events then transpiring before their very eyes!

All who have truly received the call to sonship and have received a revelation of the present truth of God have forever ceased listening to all the drivel pouring forth from the lips and pens of these carnal-minded deceivers. Apart from the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God anyone with one eye and half sense should be able to figure out that their track record is not very convincing! Every time there is movement in the Middle East they get a new antichrist! The problem with putting the antichrist in the White House, or in Europe, or in Iraq, or in Russia, or in Israel, or some other place, is that as long as you keep him out there in the external realm of world events you never have to deal with him. You see, once you realize that there really are *only two men* in the earth — Adam and Christ — the first man and the second man, the earthly man and the heavenly man, it shouldn't be too difficult to determine which of these two men is the antichrist! That gives you only two men to choose from, and that certainly narrows down the odds, doesn't it! In reality, the full truth runs much deeper than that, but that is certainly a very good starting point!

Suppose I were a pursued fugitive. Now, if I could get my pursuers sidetracked and get them to fire on a stuffed dummy made to represent myself, they would thus, by diverting their fire from me, aid in my escape. Satan has a dummy antichrist set up, a horrible creature who will never appear. And the Christian Church is busily engaged in wasting their time and ammunition on this dummy! They are telling what a terrible creature he will be, all the while ignorant of the fact that the true criminal is in their very midst! If the adversary can get the people of God to look for some imaginary man of sin yet to appear, some fictitious son of perdition to come, then he has won a victory, because then WE WILL NEVER DISCOVER THE MAN OF SIN WHERE HE ACTUALLY IS ABIDING!

The detrimental and deceiving effect of the notion of antichrist being some world leader past or present or future, is, that while people have their eyes focused on world events, they are not alert to discern his presence now — and that gives him opportunity to do a great deceptive work right in their midst. The old serpent is still very crafty, my beloved, and if he can keep us peering out into the mists of either the past or the future, we will overlook the reality in our own generation and time, and within our very own lives. “*Little children, it is the very 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*” (I Jn. 2:18). Ah, my brother, my sister, the Christian Church, for the past two thousand years, has been literally filled with antichrists! And the present-day crop is busily engaged in pointing the finger of accusation at some poor defenseless and fictitious person who is supposed to appear at some indefinite period in the future. That is the adversary's trick to keep men's eyes off of the real culprit! Satan is the sole author of the doctrines which keep men looking ahead to some character who will never appear, thus aiding his present-day emissaries to carry on his work without interruption. It is high time for God's people to awake, and learn what they are playing with. There is poison in the pot! Ah, beloved, it is high time for all the preachers and teachers and would-be prophets to leave their ignorance of God and His majestic purposes and acknowledge their desperate lack, forsaking forever the delusions of their dead letter-of-the-word interpretations of prophecy, and turn to the Lord for true SPIRITUAL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING. Thank God! He is delivering every one of His chosen elect from all this carnal-minded tom-foolery and replacing it all with the glorious *mind of Christ!* The transformation is taking place in some even as they read these lines!

In this connection I like the story about a cluster of small boys, obviously without the price of admission, who milled about near one of the entrance gates to a football stadium. An observer said to the ticket-taker in a voice resonant with authority, “Let these kids in and tell me how many there are.” The boys filed in and scampered delightedly into the crowd. As the last one entered the ticket-taker said to the observer, “Thirty-four.” The man nodded. “Right you are,” he said, as he disappeared in the crowd outside the gate. Oh, how good it would be if God's dear people could understand that just as the ticket-taker *mis-*

interpreted the intent of the man in this story, so have the Bible teachers in the popular churches *misinterpreted* the message conveyed in John's vision of the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth!

The beast out of the earth, however, is *not* the so-called antichrist! In fact, the word antichrist is not even found in the book of Revelation! There is no evidence to support the practice of taking certain events in the Revelation and connecting them with what the scriptures say about "antichrist." Quoting verses from one book of the Bible and claiming that they correspond to statements in another book of the Bible does not constitute truth. As we will see, the modern doctrine of antichrist is an amalgamation of biblical concepts and events that either are unrelated or find their fulfillment historically or spiritually. This is why confusion persists! Modern antichrist hunters are pursuing a figure who does not exist. The description they give of him is taken from passages other than those which actually speak of antichrist. Keep in mind that most modern-day Bible teachers mistakenly use the words *antichrist* and *beast* interchangeably, although there is absolutely no evidence for such a use anywhere in the Bible! So generally, when a Christian hears the word *antichrist* he thinks of the *beast* in the book of Revelation. This is a mistaken and an absurd notion! People hear things taught as gospel truth and though they don't know where the scriptural proof for them is they assume they must be so.

Do *you* know what the Bible really says about the antichrist? You may be surprised! As much as we have heard preachers speak on the subject of antichrist, one would be led to believe that the term is mentioned a thousand times in the Bible. The fact is, the antichrist is mentioned only *five times* in the whole Bible and not one of these four mentions of the antichrist is in any of the Bible's prophetic books. Not one of them is in either the book of Daniel or the book of Revelation! The word "antichrist" is not found in the teachings of Jesus, neither do we find the word in the Old Testament. What can we show from scripture, and what is mere speculation? To find out, let's think about all we have heard. All those things that Christians supposedly "know" about "the antichrist." According to what the preachers and teachers proclaim, antichrist is supposed to:

1. **Appear at the end of the age.**
2. **Rule the world for three and a half years as a good leader and three and a half years as an evil leader.**
3. **Make a covenant with the Jews**
4. **Rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.**
5. **Reinstitute temple sacrifices (first three and a half years).**
6. **Turn against the state of Israel, breaking his covenant (second three and a half Years).**
7. **Stop temple sacrifices (middle of the seven years).**
8. **Set up an image of himself and cause all to worship it.**
9. **Put a mark (666) on everyone in the world.**
10. **Start the battle of Armageddon.**
11. **Persecute the "Great Tribulation" saints.**
12. **Other misc. legends, depending on the school of thought.**

If you can accept it, *not one of these ideas* can in any way be associated with anything said in the four verses where "antichrist" is mentioned in scripture! Not a single one! And most are total fabrications! It reminds me of the story of King Charles II of England, that he once puzzled the Royal Society (a society of scientists) by propounding the question, Why is a dead fish heavier than a live one? The men of science debated this question with much acumen, and offered various solutions to it. It however occurred to one of them to make sure by experiment that the dead fish was in fact the heavier; and it was found that it was not. Now this trick of the Jesting Monarch is often played upon us by our own minds. We assume, because the preachers and teachers play the incessant drumbeat, that there IS an "end-time" tyrannical antichrist. But when one carefully examines "the alleged fact" of the one-man antichrist he is led to the astounding discovery that in fact there isn't even any such thing!

A German Prince was once visiting a certain city. When greeted by a deputation from the Town Counsel he expressed great surprise that his arrival had not been heralded by salvos of cannon. The Burgomaster, who had a sense of humor, replied that there were a hundred reasons for the omission. Asked

by the prince what they were, he began: “In the first place we have no cannon; in the second we —” “Now,” broke in the prince, “your first reason is so good that I don’t want to hear the other ninety-nine.” That answer comes to mind as one reflects on the theory of the end-time one-man antichrist and all the stupendous things attributed to him. We wait in vain for one strong argument that simply compels us to consider their view. Take a searchlight. Take all the suns and moons and stars, break the rim of the Milky Way and pour the compacted brilliance of its infinite depths of light into every crevice of the good old Book; search every page and chapter and verse and line, from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21, and you can find no trace of it in teaching, in prophecy, in parable, or in symbol. The “super-man antichrist” is simply not found in the Bible! That one reason is so good that we have no need to consider any others!

When we begin to see truth as revealed by the Spirit of Truth it is so dramatically different from what we have been taught that sometimes our first response is to think it is a heresy, a lie. The preaching of concepts like the rapture, seven-year tribulation, superman antichrist, one-world government, rebuilt Jewish temple, eternal hell and damnation, etc., has had such impact upon the Lord’s people that they actually think those things are true. And I can tell you unequivocally that such teachings scripturally have not a leg to stand upon! I know that the vast majority of those reading these lines have long ago been delivered from such delusions, but there is a whole church-world out there that still subscribes to those doctrines of men. Christians have heard such a drum-beat of teachings about the wrath and judgment of God being poured out upon sinners and upon the whole world, that when one begins to share with them the *glad tidings* of God’s gracious redemptive and restorative plan for all mankind it’s just too foreign for their minds to grasp.

There was a time — only some 400 years ago — when the people of the world believed that the earth was the center of the universe. The scientists Copernicus and Galileo observed the movements of the heavenly bodies and reached the conclusion, and Galileo was finally able to demonstrate, that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun, and not the sun around the earth as people believed. This was a daring thing to say in that day, it seemed completely illogical and absolutely contradictory to all external appearances, and was at first considered a dangerous and heretical teaching. Galileo was forced by the Roman Catholic Church to stop publishing his discoveries for many years. While today it is difficult for you and me to comprehend how deep and dark that ignorance was, it was the accepted scientific opinion for thousands of years! Five hundred years ago the whole world believed the earth was flat — until Columbus proved that it is round. It is so hard for man to change his mind! And God’s people are no different! The *carnal mind* is still enmity against God and “the natural man *receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God: for they are *foolishness* unto him: neither can he know them, for they are *spiritually discerned*” (I Cor. 2:14). It is extremely difficult for carnal-minded Christians to receive spiritual revelation — so hard, in fact, that it takes a miracle! The people esteem their ministers, trust their teachers, and accept everything they say as gospel truth without any personal examination. What an awakening it is when through the dealings of the Holy Spirit they come to see that much of what they have been taught simply *isn’t true!*

Popular religion always has been wrong. It still is. And it is so busy! Oh, that we all might now leave our delusions and press on toward the full revelation of Jesus Christ. My God, lead us onward and upward to “be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may *grow up into Him* in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15). Mature spiritual perfection alone will win the prize incomparable at the end of the race. And that perfection can be obtained only by leaving the popular crowd: by seeking the Lord who *is our life*, and by just asking Him to take us all the way into His glorious fullness of life and light and glory. He is faithful!

Now, let’s look at every verse in the Bible which mentions antichrist by name. Don’t worry, it is a very short list. If you think there are others, get your concordance out and find them. Or read the whole book of Daniel and the entire book of Revelation and watch closely for the term *antichrist*. Though I have searched the scriptures diligently I have not been able to find another single verse!

“*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*” (I Jn. 2:18).

“*Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist,, that denieth the Father and the Son*” (I Jn. 2:22).

*“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and **this is that spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and **even now already is it in the world**” (I Jn. 4:2-3).*

*“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and **an antichrist**” (II Jn. 7).*

Hard as it may be to believe, that’s all of them! There are only four verses in the whole Bible which mention the antichrist by name. That doesn’t fit with what we have heard about *the antichrist* at all, does it? Sorry, that is still all the references there are! That is every verse which mentions the antichrist! And everything the Bible has to say about the antichrist is found in those four verses. Everything else we have heard is pure speculation and hyperbole! Do these verses say anything about a *beast*? Do they say anything about a *Great Tribulation*? Do they say anything about a *world government*? Do they say anything about a *mark* or a *number*? Do they say anything about a *temple*? Do they say anything about an *image* or about *worship*? Do they say anything about a *battle of Armageddon*? If they do, I really missed it! It is obvious from reading these passages that John had no conception of some great individual at the end of the age rising up to a position of great power and all the world worshipping him. His concept is clearly that there were *many antichrists* already in the world, just as they had been told that this was coming, and that whoever does not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh IS ANTICHRIST. And that’s all there is!

God’s penman, nearly two millenniums ago wrote, that as the coming of the antichrist heralds the last hour, therefore, since there were at that time “many antichrists,” this fact proved that he himself was living even then in the “last hour.” And if he, John the beloved, saw many antichrists in his day, after only a few decades of progression into the church age, how much more may we today say that there are “many antichrists” after two thousand years of apostasy and shame, during which time the Holy Spirit also witnessed that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (II Tim. 3:13). How much more should we today expect to find the church full of these antichrists, since God also promised that in this same age “there will be a time when they will not endure wholesome instruction, but, having itching ears, will accumulate teachers for themselves, according to their own lusts; and they shall indeed turn away from the hearing of the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (II Tim. 4:3-4).

John saw many antichrists in his day. The number has been increasing steadily, all through the years, decades, and centuries, until we now find ourselves surrounded with these men. But who are they, what are they, and how do we recognize them?

First, let us consider the meaning of the word. It comes from a compound Greek word made up of the preposition *anti* and the Greek word for Christ which is *christos*. *Anti* is a Greek word meaning “opposed to” or “instead of” or *both* of these meanings. The Greek word *christos* means “anointed.” When *anti* is compounded with a noun signifying an agent of any kind, or functionary, the compound signifies a vice-functionary, or a functionary of the same kind opposing, or usurping the place of, or sometimes both. Some apply only the first meaning — a person “against” Christ. The Jews, pagans, communists, and members of non-Christian religions of all kinds have always been “against” Christ. But such a broad application of the word could not be what was meant by John. His description is far more specific than this!

When John spoke of certain people which were of the spirit of antichrist, he did not refer to *all* opposers of Christ. Instead, he referred to a certain class of people — *apostates* who were teaching things contrary to the reality that is in Christ. These were not *openly* against Christ, they were *professing* believers and *apparent* ministers of Christ! These were no longer in accord with those who abode in the truth as it is in Jesus, for John says of these antichrists, “...*even now there are many antichrists... they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be manifest that they were not all of us*” (I Jn. 2:18-19). Therefore we find that John’s use of the word “antichrist” signifies not merely one who opposes Christ, but one who sets himself up in the place of Christ, appropriating some of the attributes of Christ, but substituting error in the place of truth, and form in the place of reality. Anything that is placed *instead of* Christ is literally antichrist. Have we not

embraced and practiced a lot of religious attitudes, ideas, beliefs, doctrines, rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, ordinances, traditions, forms, means, and methods which have TAKEN THE PLACE OF TRUTH AND REALITY in our lives! These certainly contained bits and shades of truth and life, but they were NOT THE LIVING REALITY OF CHRIST WITHIN AT ALL! They were shadow, but not substance; form, but not essence; works, but not power. Any little form of *substitution* that detracts from *His indwelling life* is indeed ANTICHRIST!

If at any time we accept an “instead of” rather than HIS WORD AND WILL AND LIFE WORKING WITHIN US, we have embraced that which is “antichrist.” It is not merely that which is in direct opposition to Christ, but also includes anything which of itself might be good, but is used or relied upon *instead of* the inward life of the Spirit. And, beloved saints, the battle is not so much an outward one, but an inner conflict, until we are so cleansed by His refining fire, so purged of Babylon’s spirit and ways, that *Christ in us* becomes our *only* hope of glory! Praise God, the illuminating light of truth and the mighty dealings and processings of God in our lives are removing all these “substitutes” and “counterfeits,” reducing us to the true and only reality found in the living Christ. Aren’t you glad!

I do not believe there is any way to adequately explain, imagine, or even understand the many ways this spirit of antichrist works. Even before the apostles had passed from this life, a spirit and system had set in among the saints of the Lord and many people were wearing the Babylonish garment. They were instituting rules and regulations, laying down laws, formulating creeds, observing days, establishing sacraments and ordinances, elevating personalities and human government, becoming disciples of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and of many others. The babble had begun and the mysterious antichrist was raising his ugly head.

Before too many years had passed men began to set themselves up as “lords” over God’s people in place of the headship of Christ. Instead of conquering by the power of the spirit and by truth — as in the early days — men began to *substitute* their ideas and their methods. Soon the glory and power, the presence of God in the morning-time church began to be eclipsed, and the power of carnal-minded men and outward works and forms gradually *took the place* of the awesome power of the Christ within. Consequently, man’s carnal understanding was put upon the scriptures, and as the spirit of Christ fled from their midst, men established a vast and elaborate system of *substitutes* to take the place of reality. When one does not possess reality then something else will be used to fill the void — to take the place — instead of — an ANTICHRIST!

The powerful, mighty, glorious presence of the indwelling Christ was supplanted by endless ritual and ceremony, outward observances of feasts, holy days, communions, holy water, incense, sacraments, ordinances, shrines, relics, cathedrals, holy orders, seminaries, catechisms, robes, etc., etc. The ministry could only teach and practice these things because they had lost the consciousness and presence of HIM. As the blind led the blind the visions of the people were in error and darkness, the pure vision and experience of CHRIST LIVING AND REIGNING IN HIS PEOPLE BY THE SPIRIT was lost to them!

Some people tell me that nowhere in the New Testament is the expression “*the* antichrist” used. That, however, is a great error. It is true that the King James Bible does not refer to “the” antichrist — it speaks of antichrist, antichrists, and *an* antichrist. But the Greek text does not read that way at all. Out of the five appearances of the word antichrist two of them do have the definite article and should correctly be translated as “*the* antichrist.” This being the case, the apostle John tells us plainly, unambiguously, accurately, exactly, precisely, explicitly, and unmistakably just *who the antichrist is!* The notion that his identity is not known or cannot be known is ludicrous. It’s right there in the Book!

Now let us read the correct translation from the interlinear word for word rendering from the Greek. “*Because many deceivers entered into the world, who not confessing Jesus Anointed coming in flesh, this is the deceiver and the antichrist*” (II Jn. 7, Emphatic Diaglott). There you have it! Let me ask — Who is *the* antichrist? The *many deceivers* who have gone out into the world, who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh — these very deceivers ARE THE ANTICHRIST! Can anything be simpler or plainer than that? As clear as this testimony is, John has given us yet another identification of the antichrist just as clear, certain, and powerful as the above. In I John 2:22 the Greek text reads, “*Who is the liar, if not the one*

denying that Jesus is the Anointed one? **This is the antichrist, the one denying the Father and the Son.** Who is it, precious friend of mine, that **denies** the Father and the Son? Is it not first of all that old “natural man” or that religious “soulical man” who receives not the things of the Spirit of God, does not know them, and cannot know them?

Yet — what does John really mean when he speaks of denying the Father and the Son? Let us make no mistake about this! Fortunately, a little further on John himself enlarges on this statement so that we need not be left in the dark. *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSETH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH IS OF GOD: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and THIS IS THAT SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world”* (I Jn. 4:1-3).

Now let us get these statements clear in our minds. John declares an antichrist to be one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, which is denying the Father and the Son. But how does he do this? BY NOT CONFESSING JESUS CHRIST COMING IN THE FLESH! But what does this mean? It states that we know the Spirit of God by His confessing Jesus Christ coming in flesh. Does this mean that Roman Catholicism is the Spirit of God? It confesses that Jesus Christ was a man, born of a virgin. It confesses that He *came* in the flesh as a babe in Bethlehem. They even parade Him before the world hanging on a cross, crucified. Millions of others around the world, representing every kind of religion and cult existing, including the religion of Islam, admit the same historical facts. Do all of these represent the Spirit of God?

These verses obviously have a deeper meaning! They are not considering the fact of Jesus Christ having lived on earth as a man. Any Christian will admit that Jesus Christ came as a man and lived on this earth. Can we not see that it is not a matter of confessing the *existence* of the Father and the Son? The words of Paul to Titus demonstrate vividly the truth we are dealing with. *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him...being in every good work reprobate”* (Titus 1:16). Here we learn that men can *deny* God without denying His existence. *“In works they deny Him.” “Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself...”* I am certain that all will agree that Jesus did not mean that a man should deny his own existence! *“But if any man provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith.”* It is inconceivable to imagine that a lazy brother has repudiated and turned his back on the faith of Jesus simply because he is not providing for his family! You see, my beloved, denying means **acting contrary to**. The lazy brother has acted contrary to the truth he professes. The following verse illustrates this truth so beautifully, *“Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”* (Titus 2:12). Thus, denying ungodliness means living a Godly life, **acting contrary to our former lifestyle!**

The antichrist denies that Christ is come in the flesh. And the profound truth which all of popular religion has missed, is the fact of the Christ actually coming into this flesh, *my flesh, your flesh*, and becoming an eternal and inseparable part of us! Referring to the expression “is come” one Greek scholar points out that it is the Greek perfect, which implies not a mere historical fact, as would be the case if another tense were used, but a blessed continuance of the fact and its blessed effects. Hear it! *“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ IS (now) COME in the flesh is not of God: and THIS is that spirit of antichrist...YE are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is HE THAT IS I-N-Y-O-U, than he that IS IN THE WORLD”* (I Jn. 4:3-4). These words reveal to us the great truth that John, when speaking of confessing that Jesus Christ IS COME in the flesh, is referring to His coming *in the members of His body on earth* — and **not** in the historical man Jesus who walked the shores of blue Galilee so long ago. Every spirit that confesses not Jesus Christ now coming in flesh *is antichrist*, for it relies upon something other than the Christ within in the practice of its religion. All the religious self-righteousness, human good works, static creeds, lifeless ceremonies, fleshly organization, methods, and programs — do not all of them **deny** the Father and the Son, **denying** the Christ within, by **substituting** the wisdom and the ability of the flesh for the living word and divine power of the Christ within? Oh, yes!

“Christ liveth IN ME,” Paul wrote to the Galatians. In the same book he says, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL HIS SON IN

ME...” And again in the same book he affirms, “And because *ye* are sons, God hath SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS.” To these same saints he further wrote, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until CHRIST be formed IN YOU.” Then to the saints in Colosse he wrote, “Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory.” To the Corinthians he testified, “But this treasure (Christ) WE HAVE IN EARTHEN VESSELS.” It cannot be denied — *this* is the Christ that *is* come *in the flesh!* Isn’t it wonderful!

Oh, that men might believe it! Truly, Christ in us is our only hope of glory! HE IS the glory! But antichrist will hear of no such hope of glory. His hope does not rest wholly in the Christ within, but in his own ability and works, his own faithfulness and endurance. He is cluttered about with myriad religious exercises and works, all of which are designed to assure his right standing with God. He is thus denying the Father and the Son, for the *living Christ alone* is not his life! Anything that *adds something* to the Christ-life within, to fill some place or function in our lives that is not filled by THE LIFE OF CHRIST ALONE — is **antichrist!** Those who have truly received the call to sonship have now learned, and learned well, that there is no need for any of the religious trappings in the walk of sonship, for CHRIST WITHIN abundantly supplies everything they can possibly ever need! In order for Christ to be “all in all” He must first become ALL! God was in Christ, and God in Christ is in us! From the moment that the Father declared Christ’s sonship the spirit of sonship moved in and through Him and His whole life became the revelation of His Father. The nature, mind, will, and power of His Father manifested through Him, and it was the same power of the Father in Him that raised Him from the dead! And now a vast family of His “many brethren” have received that same spirit of sonship, even the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells within us and shall also quicken *our mortal bodies* by that spirit which *dwells in us!*

Let us bow in holy reverence to worship and adore, and to live and walk in the blessed reality of such an high and holy calling! Stop seeking anything at all from or through the myriad *substitutes* pawned by the countless modern day antichrists of the church systems of man. These external religious observances will not suffice for those destined for the throne, neither will any of it satisfy the deepest cravings of your heart after God! CHRIST HIMSELF IS SUFFICIENT! This is the confession of every son of God, the confession that Jesus Christ Himself has come in our flesh. In the name of Jesus Christ, divorce yourself completely and forever from all the substitutes, the realm of the **instead of** — CHRIST WITHIN YOU IS ALL YOU NEED! This is the Christ who was Jesus of Nazareth, but who now is the many sons of God in the earth! God is bringing many sons to glory and we are being conformed to the image of God’s firstborn Son.

Only the formation of Christ within us can bring us into our true stature and relationship to our Father. Sonship is Christ *formed* in each member of God’s elect! This spirit of sonship is both ageless and deathless, the actual son of the Father in heaven. He abides eternally in this human identity, even as he abides eternally in Jesus to perform His mighty works. And it is a union which is becoming a glorious and eternal reality within God’s sons in this great day of the Lord! But — “many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ *is come* in the flesh. This is *the deceiver* and *the antichrist*” (II Jn. 7). These deceivers acknowledge the historical Christ of two thousand years ago, but they recognize Him not as having returned in mighty spirit power within the CHRIST BODY. These deceivers speak much of sweet Jesus in some far-off heaven somewhere, but they reject the manifestation of Him through the members of His body upon earth!

Antichrist is not some demon possessed ruler, but the spirit that is in thousands of preachers and messages today, in that they deny the Christ that has now come in the flesh. Yet they sing with great fervor that they would like to be like Jesus. How in the world could we be conformed to the image of God’s Son if the very spirit of sonship is not activating in our body of flesh, to bring us into conformity with His likeness. We know of no other way to live like Jesus, speak like Jesus, and do the works of Jesus, except that Jesus Christ dwells, speaks, and acts within us. Because Satan has people looking for an antichrist who will reign from a Jewish temple in Jerusalem, they are missing the fact that the spirit of antichrist is operating in their own preaching. Therefore we find that most of the candidates for antichrist promoted by the preachers haven’t even come close to *being* antichrists!

Not only do we not deny that the Christ is come in the flesh, but every spirit that *confesses* His indwelling life is of God. There is a wonderful depth to this subject we are now considering, **confessing** the

Christ within. A dear friend, Connie Asbill, explored this depth in a letter she wrote to me nearly thirty years ago, and I now quote. “In conjunction with this, I see a passage that has come to hold great meaning for me in recent years — the one in which Jesus says, *‘Whosoever therefore shall **confess me** before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven’* (Mat. 10:22), and another much like it but with an added thought, *‘Also I say unto you (that) whosoever shall **confess me** before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God’* (Lk. 12:8). At the surface, the link between these passages is not immediately apparent. Delving into the Greek, however, I have found my heart set aflame many times as I have pondered the depth of what Jesus is saying here. The Greek word for ‘confess’ here is a compound word that joins *homos*, which means ‘the same’ or ‘at the same place or time,’ with *logos*, which, as you well know, means ‘the word’ or ‘what is said.’

“Thus a transliteration of this Greek word into the English would be this: **same-word**. What Jesus is saying here, then, in a most literal translation of the Greek is this, what is to me a most glorious thought: *‘Whosoever therefore shall **same-word** me before men, him will I also **same-word** before my Father which is in heaven.’* And, in an expansion of that which I consider most significant — even critical — to our full understanding of this, it would go on to read in the Luke passage: *‘Also I say unto you (that) whosoever shall **same-word** me before men, him shall the Son of man **same-word** before the angels of God.’*

“I cannot write these words without hearing a word Dick Leland ministered in which he said, ‘Jesus was the word when He was speaking, and He was the word when He was not speaking!’ Every act that Jesus performed, every word that Jesus spoke, every silence (as when He refused to answer the Pharisees who brought the woman taken in adultery) and every inaction (as when He deliberately delayed a response to the news that Lazarus had died), every public appearance and every hiding from the multitudes — all this was all that He saw the Father do in the heavens, replicated in the earth to be witnessed by men. He same-worded the Father, and because He same-worded the Father, the Father same-worded Him by putting the stamp of approval upon the life He lived in the flesh. *‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.’*” — end quote.

May I add — as I see it, Jesus said and did only what He heard His Father say and saw His Father do in heaven, and the Father honored that same-wording by causing every word Jesus spoke and every action He took to be validated on earth. And now, blessed be God, when the younger brethren of our Lord same-word Him on earth, He same-words them before His Father, thus releasing the life and the power and the glory to bring forth the *manifestation of the sons of God* in the earth! That is the mystery!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY