

The Spirit of Antichrist (Part 1)



The Enemies We Face (Part 11)
by Derek Prince

In our first two talks we dealt, first of all, with the nature and the structure of Satan's kingdom. I pointed out that there are two opposing spiritual kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Both of them spiritual and both of them at this time invisible to the natural eye but extremely real. And we attempted to trace the origin of Satan's kingdom to an archangel originally named Lucifer who led a group of angels in rebellion against God and set up a rival kingdom in a region which is called in the New Testament "the heavenlies." That phrase "the heavenlies" actually occurs five times in the epistle to the Ephesians, which is the main section of Scripture that unfolds God's revelation of the church. I think it is no accident that the emphasis there is on the heavenlies. The church of Jesus Christ is supposed to be operating in the heavenlies against another kingdom also established in the heavenlies and, for the benefit of those who are confused, I would like to point out that in the Bible from the first verse onwards the word "heaven" is plural. There is more than one heaven and somewhere between our planet and God's throne and the heaven of God's Presence there is a rival satanic kingdom in opposition to God.

And then we dealt in the second talk with one of the main activities of the satanic kingdom, one of the main ways its power is manifested, which is witchcraft. For many people witchcraft has a kind of old-fashioned sound, like something from the Middle Ages, which has long ceased to be relevant, but that is totally untrue. Witchcraft is very real and I think has never been more active in human history than it is today. And many nations which a generation ago would have been described as Christian, are today pervaded with intense activity by witchcraft.

I've tried to give a brief definition of witchcraft in three areas. First of all, as a work of the flesh, one of the ways that man's fallen nature expresses itself, and I gave the three key words: to manipulate, to intimidate and to dominate. The aim of witchcraft simply is to control other people and get them to do what you want them to do. And it does not use legitimate means. Witchcraft is closely allied with rebellion. It is the outworking of man's rebellion against God.

In the second area witchcraft is a sort of supernatural satanic religion with many different aspects and phases. The priest

of witchcraft in most countries is called the witch doctor. And you cannot find a single area of the earth's surface where people have not been engaged in witchcraft, mostly from time immemorial. And in many, many areas of the world it is still the prevailing spiritual activity.

And then, thirdly, we dealt with witchcraft in the church, which is one of Satan's master strokes. Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians and said, "Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" And we saw that the evidence that they were bewitched consisted in the fact that the work of Jesus on the cross had been obscured. And through that they had been deprived of all the benefits that Jesus had obtained for them. And this work of witchcraft expressed itself in the church in two main things: carnality, relying on the flesh rather than on the spirit; and an outworking of carnality, legalism. And I suggest to you, and I don't think I'm exaggerating, that very possibly most of the professing Christian church answers to that description. It has turned away from the supernatural grace and power of the Holy Spirit, resorts now on human methods, human efforts and is in a sense tied up in all sorts of legalistic systems. I've told people in some places that Christianity is not a set of rules and sometimes people have looked at me in amazement. I think they could almost more easily have accepted the statement if I had said, "There is no God."

Well, this evening we're going on to the next main outworking of Satan's kingdom, of Satan's opposition to God and to the church of Jesus Christ, and we are going to deal with something that I have headed "The Spirit of Antichrist." We need to turn, first of all, to the passage in 1 John where this is primarily described. First John, chapter 2, beginning in verse 18.

> "Little children, it is the last hour: and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. [Notice that the advent and the working of the spirit of antichrist is going to intensify the closer we get to the end of the age.] They [that is, these antichrists] went out from us ['us' being the church of Jesus] but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. [Or an alternative reading: 'You all know,' which is probably the right one.] I have not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you know it and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either. He who acknowledges the Son has the Father also."

Let me, first of all, try and just briefly explain the real meaning of that strange phrase "antichrist." You need to bear in mind, first of all, that the word "Christ" is from a Greek word christos which exactly corresponds to the Hebrew word Mashiach from which we get Messiah. It is amazing how many Jews and Christians do not realize that Messiah and Christ are two different words for the same thing. So when we say "antichrist," that means anti-Messiah. And it is probably easier for us to get the picture if we use the phrase Messiah.

And then again the preposition... (If you don't know what a preposition is, if you don't, don't worry. You can get by without it. Heaven is also open to those who don't know what prepositions are.) But anyhow, the preposition "anti" is a Greek preposition. It has two meanings and both of them apply. First of all, it means "against." So the first operation is against Messiah. The second meaning is "in place of." And so the ultimate purpose is to put a false Messiah in place of the true Messiah.

So this force operates, first of all, by excluding Messiah; and secondly, by replacing Him by a false Messiah. So the total operation is in two phases and when you begin to recognize that, I think you will see that the spirit of antichrist is extremely active almost throughout the whole professing church.

Ruth and I have friends in America who belong to a church which would be called in the old-line evangelical stream. I don't want to name the denomination. And they said to me one day, they said: "In our church you can talk about Buddha, you can talk about Socrates, you can talk about Plato, you can talk about Martin Luther King, and no one gets upset. But if you talk about Jesus everybody gets upset." And what is that? It is the spirit of antichrist. It's in its first phase of getting rid of the true Messiah. But we all need to bear in mind that that is not the end of Satan's purpose. His purpose is to replace the true Messiah by a false Messiah. So that is what we are dealing with.

It becomes obvious when you see that, that this particular operation of Satan is only applicable where Jesus has been preached. You cannot reject Jesus if you have never heard about Jesus. So witchcraft is different. Witchcraft belongs to the whole fallen human race. It is, in fact, as I said, the universal religion of the fallen race with many different

manifestations and forms and ceremonies. But antichrist can only be manifested where Christ has first been preached.

In the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry, it is recorded in Matthew's Gospel that He said to Satan, "Get behind Me," which is the normal way to translate it. But it is perfectly possible to translate that, "Follow behind Me." And I believe that is a spiritual reality that wherever Jesus and the Gospel are proclaimed, God will permit the opposite claim to follow. In fact, humanity is going to be forced to choose between the true Messiah and the false. It is part of God's way of dealing with us that He does not exclude the false options and it is our responsibility to make the right choice. I think this is extremely relevant to our generation. I believe this generation in one form or another is going to have to make a decision: true Messiah or false Messiah. And the spirit of antichrist is extremely active, much more than most of you have any idea, pressuring us into the wrong decision.

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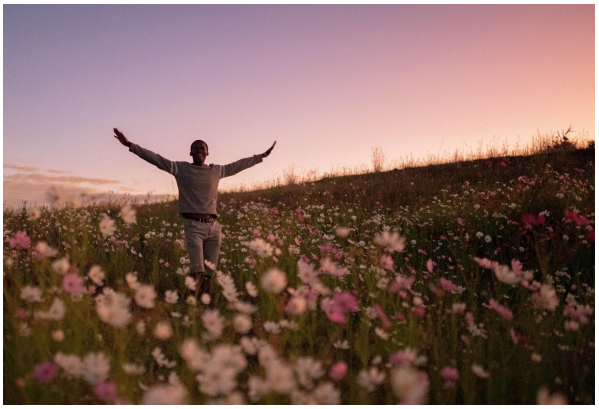
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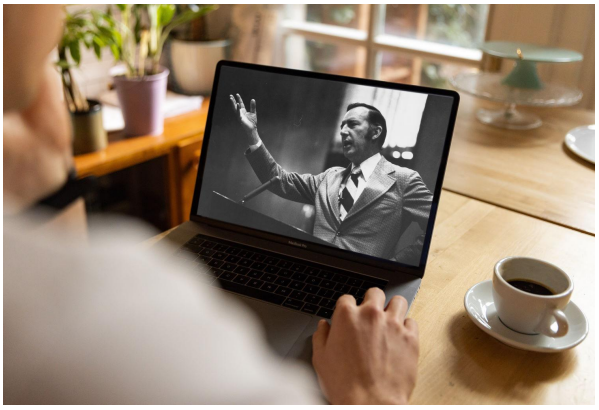
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