

The Spirit of Antichrist (Part 2)



The Enemies We Face (Part 12)
by Derek Prince

Now in this passage that we have read in 1 John, chapter 2—maybe we should read two verses of 1 John 4, just two verses also, verses 2 and 3:

> "By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus the Messiah has come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus the Messiah has come in the flesh is not of God. [Now some of you who have alternative translations will have a shorter version: 'Every spirit that does not confess Jesus the Messiah.' The meaning is the same.] And this is the spirit of the antichrist which you have heard was coming and now is already in the world."

If we look at the two passages together, we see there three forms of antichrist. First of all, there are many antichrists and in the course of human history many, many antichrists have appeared and been manifested. I'll speak briefly about just a few of them in a little while.

Secondly, there is the antichrist, not many, but just one specific. That, I believe, is the final manifestation, the final product of the spirit of antichrist which has not yet been, as far as I know, revealed in human history. I often say to people, "I think his shadow has already fallen across the stage but we have not seen the actual person." But at the end of this age, Scripture makes it clear, there will be one final, supremely evil, supremely powerful ruler, who will dominate the whole human race for a brief period, who will be the antichrist.

The third form is the spirit of antichrist. The spirit of antichrist is the spirit that operates through every antichrist. And John has given us certain marks of the spirit of antichrist which are very important. First of all, it starts in association with God's people, for John says in the first epistle of John chapter 2 verse 19:

> "They [the antichrists] went out from us, 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."

So antichrist always begins in some way in association with the people of God. But, it does not really belong there and in due course that will be made manifest. That is one mark of the spirit of antichrist.

The second one is that it denies that Jesus is the Messiah. First John 2:22:

> "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the [Messiah]? He is antichrist..."

And then John continues with the third mark:

> "He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son."

This is very important. Antichrist does not deny the existence of God. In fact, he claims to be God's representative. What he does deny is the relationship of the Father and the Son within the Godhead. And wherever you encounter the denial of that, you are probably facing the spirit of antichrist.

And the fourth mark of antichrist which is given in 1 John chapter 4 is that it denies Messiah has come—probably believes in Messiah who will come, but denies that Messiah has already come.

Let me recapitulate those four marks, because they are extremely important.

First of all, antichrist starts in association with God's people.

Second, it denies that Jesus is the Messiah. Obviously, that cannot be paganism because paganism hasn't even heard of Jesus, you understand. It can only take place where Jesus has been proclaimed.

Third, it denies the Father/Son relationship within the Godhead. It does not necessarily deny God, but denies a God who is revealed as Father and Son.

And fourth, it denies that Messiah has come, but very likely teaches that Messiah will come.

Now let's take some historical examples and I have to confess that what I'm going to say is somewhat controversial.

The problem with the truth is, it is liable to be controversial. I have certainly no desire to offend anybody and I have no particular desire to attack other religions. What I want to do is present the truth. But the first and most persistent and long-standing manifestation of the spirit of antichrist is in Judaism.

We always used to think that Christianity kind of branched off from Judaism and that is what the Jewish people basically will tell you. Let me say, I'm not Jewish, although my wife is, and we are very, very close to the Jewish people. I have come to see that that is not true. What has happened is, Christianity (that is, the teaching of Jesus and His disciples, not the whole lot of "Church"ianity that has followed ever since, but the teaching of Jesus and His disciples) is the true continuation of the religion of the Old Testament. And Judaism has branched off from it. That is a very important thing to see, especially if you're dealing with Jewish people, as we often are.

So that is the first mark. It started in association with the people of God. I'm no expert on Judaism but if you analyze its teaching, much of it is an unacknowledged refusal to believe in Jesus. A great deal of what is taught is a way of denying the claims of Jesus.

The second manifestation of antichrist in Judaism of course is very simple. It denies that Jesus is the Messiah but it believes in the Messiah who is to come.

Third, it denies the Father/Son relationship within the Godhead. It rejects the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God and does not accept that God has a Son.

And fourthly, as I have said, it denies that Messiah has come.

Interestingly, just to make this subject up-to-date, this past summer, 1988, in Jerusalem very elegant posters appeared in the city on all the main streets of the city, in Hebrew, saying this: "Messiah has come and if you want to meet Him, go to the Mount of Olives on a certain Sunday and He will be there." Beautifully printed. I have no idea who printed them. I do know one journalist went there to see what happened but he did not find Messiah. But that is just to show you how real this issue is. If you talk to Jewish people in a sympathetic attitude and you use the name Messiah, something changes in their eyes, because it is a word that has a special significance for Jewish people.

Now I want to offer you a suggestion, a thought that I have and you are perfectly free to disagree with me. I want to turn to Matthew, chapter 27 for a moment and just read one verse. I suggest to you that in this verse we have the first actual powerful manifestation of the spirit of antichrist. Matthew 27, verse 21. Jesus has been brought before the governor Pontius Pilate. Pilate can find nothing wrong with Jesus, but the Jewish religious leaders persist in accusing

Him and stir up the whole Jewish multitude to turn against Him. And we need to bear in mind that any of those people in that multitude must have been in the same multitude that just one week earlier had welcomed Him to Jerusalem, had put palm branches in the way and said, "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!" which illustrates something that I think we ought not to ignore, but that humanity is extremely fickle. It did not take them more than one week to totally reverse their attitude, but I don't believe it was just a natural human reaction. I believe that there was a tremendous spiritual war going on in the unseen realm and unfortunately the spirit of antichrist prevailed. And this is what happened. The governor Pontius Pilate brought Jesus out and said, "It is your privilege that I release one prisoner to you this season every year. Shall I release Jesus or shall I release Barabbas?" Barabbas was a political agitator, a murderer, a man of violence. He had never done anybody any good, whereas on the other hand Jesus had never done anybody any harm. He had healed thousands, blessed thousands, fed thousands. There was no logical reason whatever to turn against Jesus. It was not logic, it was a spiritual force at work. And this, I believe, is the key verse, Matthew 27:21:

> "The governor [that's Pilate] answered and said to them [the Jewish crowd], which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

And so Israel is a kind of antitype of what will happen to humanity, in my opinion. Because I believe all humanity ultimately is going to be faced with this choice, "Which of the two?" Do you want Jesus, the Savior, the Healer, the Righteous One; or do you want Barabbas, a wicked, violent, political agitator? In a certain sense Barabbas is a type of the antichrist. And they chose… Barabbas. Let us not point a finger at them. Let us be very careful when the time comes we don't make the same mistake.

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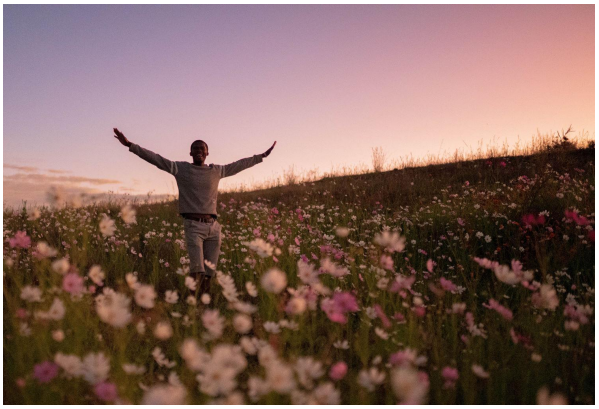
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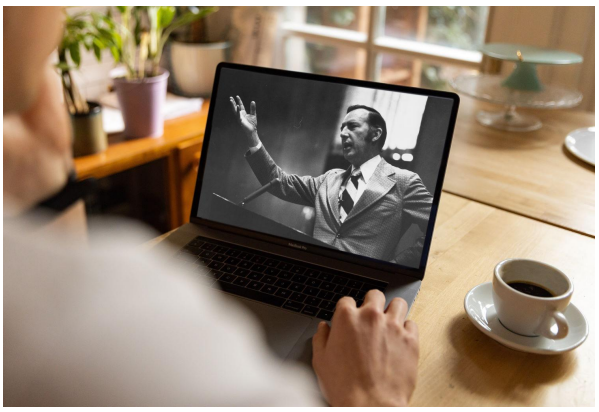
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