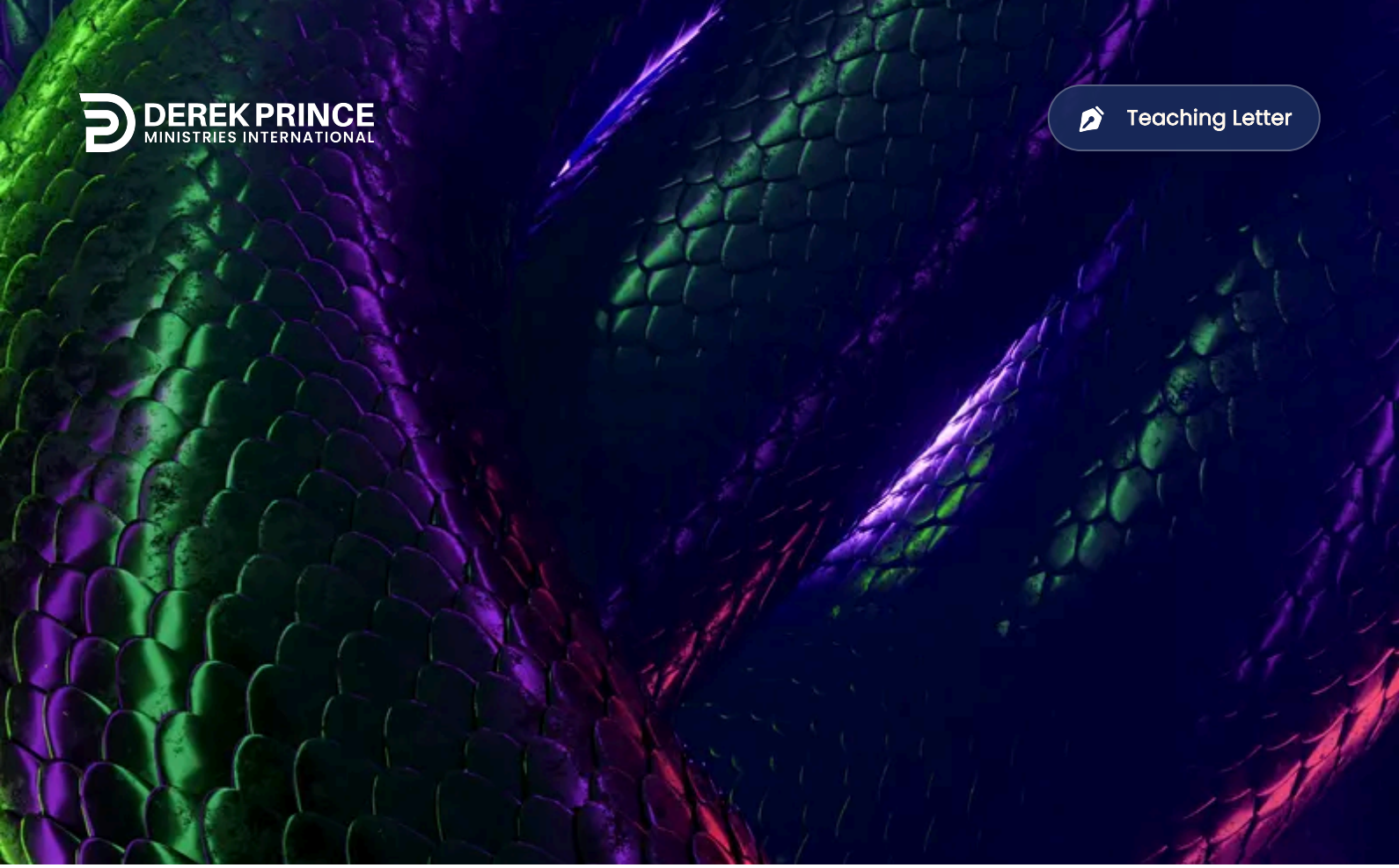


DEREK PRINCE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Teaching Letter

The Nature of the Beast



Part 1/3

Decision Time
By Derek Prince

The teaching letters in this series, *Decision Time*, cover three distinct themes: this letter explains *The Nature of the Beast*, a Biblical picture of the Antichrist—the spiritual force that opposes God. In the next teaching we will explore *The Nature of the Lamb*: through the lens of Scripture, this looks at the spiritual war between the Beast (Satan) and the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ). Lastly, we will look at the role of the Holy Spirit, *the Dove*, who helps us overcome the Beast.

When I first began teaching on the subject of spiritual warfare in the late 60's and early 70's, many Christians were skeptical. *"This is too negative. Too much attention is being given to the devil. Why can't we just talk about Jesus?"*

Undeterred by these objections, I continued to teach on God's total revelation concerning the end times, including messages from the Word of God about the Antichrist and the spirit of Antichrist. I believe that Christians who do not pay attention to biblical admonitions on this topic are in great danger of being swept away by deception.

Closer Than We Think

We never want to give undue attention to the devil. But as we draw closer to this final confrontation between Christ and the Antichrist, we need to know what we are up against. In order to fully grasp the glory and power of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, it is necessary to start by looking at His—and our—greatest opponent: Satan. That is the purpose of this three-part Teaching Letter series, *Decision Time.* In these letters, drawn from the newly released book, The Beast or the Lamb, we will examine the biblical contrast between the nature of the Beast (Satan and the Antichrist) and the nature of the Lamb (Jesus Christ).

A Contrast In Character

The Beast and the Lamb as revealed in Scripture have completely opposite natures. The Beast is cunning, deceitful, arrogant, boastful, vicious, cruel, treacherous, murderous, despotic, and dominating. In contrast, the Lamb is truthful, peaceable, humble, meek, pure, strong, simple, and self-sacrificial.

While Jesus Christ is the true Lamb of God, the Bible tells us that Satan is the entity behind the Beast. The end-times battle will have these two opposing sides: Christ against the

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Antichrist, the Lamb against the Beast, Truth against falsehood.

In the challenging days ahead, we will either cultivate the nature of the Lamb, or the nature of the wild Beast. Which nature will you choose? Now is the time to decide.

Who Is Antichrist?

To help us discern the spirit operating in the world today, let's begin by examining the word antichrist. The word Christ is taken from the Greek word Christos, which relates to the Hebrew word Meshiach, or in English, Messiah ("the Anointed One"). Jesus Christ is Jesus the Messiah. The preposition anti has a double meaning—against and in place of. Thus, the antichrist is the anti-Messiah, who comes against the true Christ to get Him out of the way and to replace Him with a false christ.

In 1 John 2:18, the Apostle John speaks about the presence of the Antichrist in the last days:

> Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come.

Further on in 1 John 4:2–3 we read:

> Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of Antichrist, which you heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

Within those two quotes, we see three forms of "antichrist": many antichrists (plural), the Antichrist (singular), and the spirit of Antichrist. This last truth is supremely important: Any antichrist is controlled by the spirit of the Antichrist.

When trying to discern the spirit behind a person, a situation, or a movement, ask yourself these three questions:

1. Does this refer to the spirit of the Antichrist?
2. Does it refer to one of the many antichrists?
3. Does it refer to the Antichrist?

Throughout history, there have been many antichrists. However, there is one who is called the Antichrist. He is the ultimate manifestation of the spirit of the Antichrist. We might logically say that his coming is so near that his shadow has already fallen across the stage of history.

Four Marks of Antichrist

The First Mark—It Goes Out from Us

We read about this in 1 John 2:19: "[Many 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." The spirit of the Antichrist begins in association with the people of God, but those who adhere to the Antichrist do not remain with Christians. They go out from Christianity.

The Second Mark—It Denies the Father-Son Relationship

Continuing with 1 John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son." This second mark is very conspicuous in Islam, one of the most powerful anti-Christian forces in the world. On the dome of the great mosque of Omar, which stands on the temple site in Jerusalem, there are inscriptions which *twice* state these words, "God has no need of a son."

The Third Mark—It Denies that Jesus Came in the Flesh

1 John 4:2 says, "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God." The spirit of the Antichrist denies that Jesus has come in the flesh. It will not affirm that the Messiah came as a man of flesh and blood.

The Fourth Mark—It Does Not Confess Jesus

Continuing with 1 John 4:3: "And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world." Unequivocally, we can say that any spirit that does not acknowledge what the Bible says about Jesus is an antichrist spirit.

The First Manifestation

The Bible records the first time the spirit of the Antichrist actually manifested itself. In Matthew 27:21–22, Jesus stood before Pilate and his accusers, the Jewish religious leaders.

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Pilate intended to release one prisoner—Jesus or Barabbas. Which would they choose?

> The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!" Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

Clearly, this was a deliberate rejection of Jesus and a choosing of another in His place. Barabbas was a violent political prisoner—a known murderer. Jesus, on the other hand, had never harmed anyone. He had done nothing but good. He had healed countless people (some of whom may have been in the crowd) and had brought peace and love to multitudes.

This unexpected choice by the crowd is one of the most amazing facts of human history. Why did the Jews make that tragic mistake? I believe that, without understanding it, they were overwhelmed by a spirit—the spirit of the Antichrist.

Let us not point our fingers at them. When the time comes for us to make such a choice—to make our ultimate decision—we should be very careful not to make the same mistake ourselves. A spiritual force swept through that crowd—and changed them. They became almost insane with rage without any justifiable cause. I believe that is the moment when the spirit of the Antichrist first appeared on the stage of humanity.

Jesus had warned the Jewish people about this when they disputed His claim to be the Messiah:

> I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. (John 5:43)

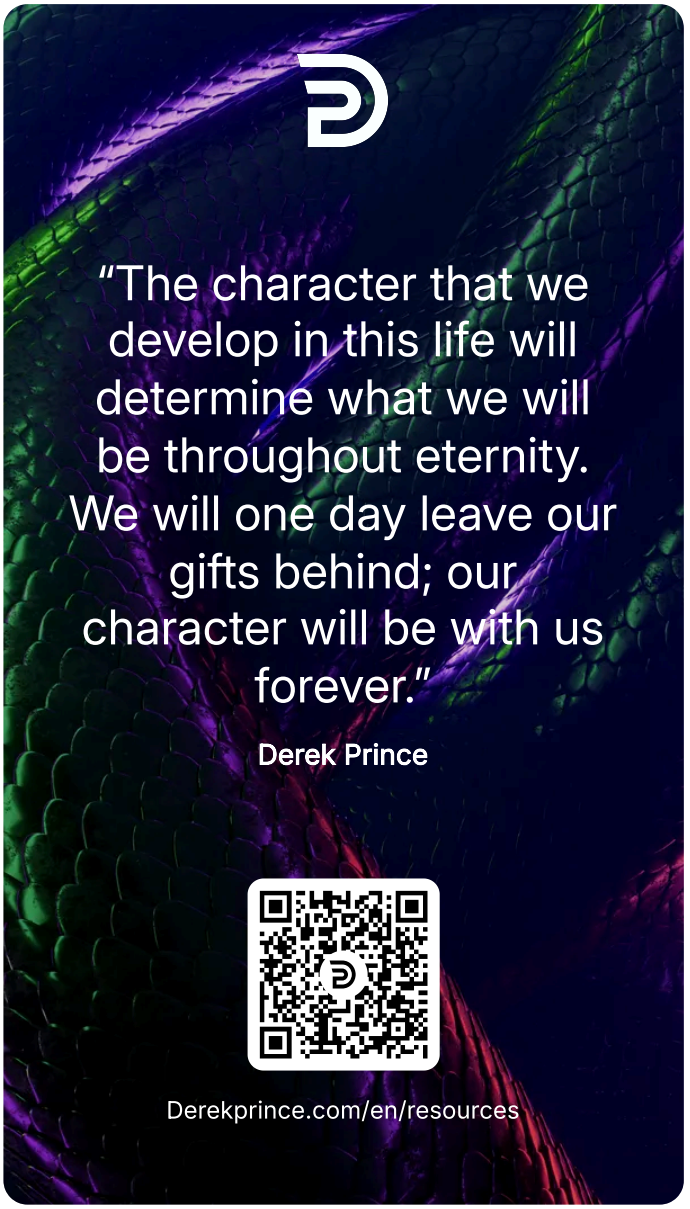
I believe this warning from Jesus is a preview of what is going to happen in the world. God will confront the human race with a choice: "Do you want Jesus? Or do you want someone else?" The same spiritual force that overwhelmed the crowd in Jesus' day will cause the vast majority of people to declare, "Away with Jesus. We'll choose..." Whomever they choose will be infinitely worse than Barabbas.

What Should We Do?

The truths presented in this letter are challenging. But all of us urgently need to receive this instruction. We must not presume that we could never be deceived.

What is our first line of defense against this deception? Maintaining a passionate devotion for God's truth above all else in our lives. Together, let's pray for that now.

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