

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE ANTICHRIST

The English word "antichrist" is a transliteration of the Greek word **antichristos**. By "transliteration" is meant that it is, with slight modification, a carrying over of a word from one language to another. It would seem that when this is done the meaning of the English word would be identical with the Greek but this is not so. Therefore, if truth is our goal, the exact meaning of the original word must be discovered. This, at first glance, would seem to be a simple matter, but we will find it to be a rather difficult task when we seek the exact meaning of the first part of the word antichristos. It is a flagrant error to take it for granted that whatever "anti" signifies in English, it also means this in the Greek.

The word **anti** (not the prefix) is found as a word twenty-two times in the Greek N.T. (See E.G.C., page 56). It is translated "for" 16 times, "because" 4 times, "therefore" 1 time, and "in the room of" 1 time. None of these renderings has any relationship to what the prefix "anti" means in English. In our language it means against, or hostile opposition. We will lose out on a very important revelation of truth if we make the Greek word anti to express English ideas. In the Greek usage anti means "instead of," "in the place of," where a thing or person is put in the place of another. Its leading idea is that of substitution. It is found many times in the papyrus manuscripts concerning which Moulton and Milligan have to say in their "Vocabulary": "By far the commonest meaning of anti is 'instead of.' "

When anti IS combined with Christos it does not change the meaning of either word. This combined form is found five times in the New Testament, all occurrences being in the epistles of John: 1 John 2:18 (twice); 2:22; 4:3; and 2 John 1:7. The first declaration concerning this is quite revealing.

Little children, it is the last time (hora, hour): **and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time** (hour). 1 John 2:18.

The word hora means "hour", and when used figuratively it speaks of a short period of time that has certain characteristics. The statements made in the above passage have to do with the destruction of Jerusalem, a city beloved by every Israelite, but one whose destruction had been predicted by the Lord Jesus, a fate which every believing Jew expected and dreaded as being inevitable. (I do not accept the late date that is given arbitrarily to John's epistles. They belong to the Acts period, as 1 John 5:16 clearly indicates.)

It should be noted that the truth declared in this passage sets forth "one" antichrist who was to come, and "many" antichrists were then present and in evidence at that time. When we have found what the word antichrist means, many of us will be inclined to say: "If John saw evidence of many antichrists at that time, he should be here today and see what we are seeing." It now seems that every time we look, listen, or read we come face to face with another antichrist. And by this I do not mean someone who is violently opposing Jesus Christ, for I am speaking of all those persons, places, and things that are put forward in the place of Christ, as a substitute for Christ.

Since the dominant idea set forth in the first part of the word antichrist is "instead of"; that is to say, "in place of" or substitution, it should be clear to all that in the things related to God that any person, place or thing that is given recognition, right, place, or privilege that belongs to Jesus Christ, all such can be classed as substitute Christs, even antichrists.

Ordinances and rituals are constantly being set forth as substitutes for Christ. Those who talk about sins being washed away in the waters of baptism are putting forth a substitute for Him. Those who think that the forgiveness of sins can be obtained by confessions, sorrow, regret, or ceremonies are putting something else in Christ's place. They have found a substitute for Him; they have an antichrist.

Even good things can become antichrists if they are depended upon to do the work that Christ alone can do. Any man who puts himself forth as God's special agent and representative is putting himself forth as a substitute for Christ. He is offering himself instead of Christ.

The God of the universe is a seeking God. He is not looking for offenders to punish. He seeks for sinners to save. His invitation is ever, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He is inviting men to be linked with Him. However, there are millions who take this invitation to mean, "Go, join a church," or "Link yourself to a compatible group." It is obvious that this is what many do. They are offered this "instead of" Christ and they receive it gladly. It satisfies them; but if it does not, they start out looking for another substitute for Christ. They

never seem to realize that any substitute for a personal relationship to Christ is an antichrist.

In a recent publication there were pictures of a large group of physically handicapped people who were starting off on a difficult journey to Lourdes in France in order to find healing for the things that afflicted them. Their journey was declared to be a great exhibition of faith. It would have been good if someone who had the ear of this group could have told them: "Jesus Christ said: 'Come unto Me:' He did not say, 'Go to Lourdes.'" They should be told if miraculous deliverance was available for them it would be found in Christ. Thus we see how a small town in S.W. France is made a substitute for Christ. Thus it becomes antichrist.

Yes, John, we see many antichrists today. Myriads of persons, places, and things are by many given the place that belongs to Him. Many have their own personal antichrist, something or someone that is made a substitute for Christ. Personal observation has convinced me that no one thing is used as a substitute for Jesus Christ as is water baptism and its resulting church membership. This is all that millions have, and with this they are quite satisfied. They have found a substitute for a personal relationship with Christ. This ceremony, they trust, has washed away their sins. Be warned! Baptism and church membership could easily be made a substitute for the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are trusting in ordinances or rituals for salvation have something for their Savior that must be designated as "antichrist."

It would be good indeed if all those who are so exercised about the identity and activities of the "one antichrist" would turn their thoughts and energies toward recognizing and exposing the "many antichrists" that are dominating the world today.

While the true believer is avowing, "Nothing but Christ," the religious world is prone to declare, "Anything but Christ," and the world joins in this sentiment. This is "the spirit of antichrist" that is set forth in I John 4:3 where we are told: **"Every spirit that confesses 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."**

The spirit of antichrist is seen in all of those who are constantly creating and setting up substitutes for Jesus Christ. Thousands of these substitutes could be named if one would undertake to do so. Churches, lodges, ordinances, ministers, popes, cardinals, bishops, pastors, and priests are often set forth as being replacements for Jesus Christ. They can all be manifestations of the antichrist spirit that is in the world today.

However, we need to give some consideration to the one personal antichrist who is yet to come, that charming, alluring, engaging, delightful personality who will offer himself to the world and be accepted by many as a substitute for the Christ of God. I

first heard of this one about sixty-eight years ago during the first World War, when many preachers were declaring dogmatically that Kaiser Wilhelm was the antichrist. Among these positive prophets was the well-known Dr. Paul Rader, who was then pastor of the great Moody Church in Chicago. I heard him tell of how when he came to Chicago, the first advertisement that he carried to The Chicago Daily News announcing the Sunday services contained a line concerning his subject: "Is Kaiser Wilhelm the Antichrist?" His answer to this was an unequivocal "Yes."

This was exactly what the crowds wanted to hear, and Rader gained much notoriety and popularity by his bold pronouncement. As the war rolled on and the United States entered into it, it resulted in our country fighting against the antichrist. Later when the allied armies were moving forward to victory, Rader was somewhat ambivalent about the triumph, since, according to his ideas, it was not supposed to come out that way. Antichrist was supposed to be victorious and dominate the world until he was destroyed by the return of Christ. In 1921 when the deposed Kaiser made some small flurry of resurgence and restoration, Mr. Rader became quite euphoric and declared: "Keep your eye on that man; he may yet turn out to be the antichrist, even as I have said before." I was in the meeting when this statement was made.

Since that time I have heard of many who were declared by someone to be the antichrist. But after one has noted and watched a long string of these, as I have, all the way from Kaiser Wilhelm to Colonel Kadafi, he reaches the point of ad nauseam (the point of nausea), and refuses to listen to anyone's announcement that this one or that one is the antichrist.

I am not interested in anyone's idea as to who the antichrist may be. In fact, the only interest I have in him is what the Bible declares concerning him, particularly the time of his appearance. The world stage must be fully set for his appearance and his activities, and it is not set this way today. How can a covenant be broken before one is made? How can he seat himself in "the temple of God" when no such temple is in existence?

In subsequent studies we will seek to set forth more about his character and subsequent activities.

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