

# WHO IS THE “ANTICHRIST”?

WHO IS THE "ANTICHRIST"? For nearly two thousand years, theologians and laymen have speculated about "the Antichrist." Dozens of political, military and religious leaders have been dubbed "the Antichrist." Usually, he is seen as the embodiment of all evil; a satanic, devious, plotting conspirator who seeks the overthrow of God's church, and along with it the overthrow of democracy and freedom, If not the destruction of all mankind. Is there such a person? Is he alive NOW, and will he become prominent in world affairs in the future? Just WHO, or WHAT is the infamous "Antichrist"?

*By Garner Ted Armstrong*

Hundreds of books, tracts, articles and booklets have been written by hundreds of authors purporting to reveal the truth about the Satanic "Antichrist."

Down through history, according to alarmists, would-be theologians and cult leaders, he was Caligula, Nero, Diocletian, or any number of Roman Emperors; he was Pope Leo, Gregory, Pius, Sixtus, or he was Attila the Hun, Bismarck, the Kaiser, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, or Josef Stalin.

In more recent history he has been Pope John Paul II, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, George H.W. Bush, Prince Charles, or has been identified with the Illuminati, the Masons, The Trilateral Convention, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Chase Manhattan Bank, David Rockefeller, or a group of Jewish multibillionaires who control the diamond trade. He has even been identified as the U.S. government.

He has also been any religious leader or cultic guru who falls in disfavor with his followers or rival religious organizations.

Almost any individual, organization, church or government which is feared or viewed with suspicion and hatred, has been dubbed the "Antichrist" by detractors.

Hundreds of tracts, pamphlets, articles, booklets and books have been written purporting to identify the "Antichrist" as one of those above, or some other individual or church under suspicion.

All such writings invariably attack the organization or individual with a combination of facts and suppositions; insignia, heraldry, badges of office, crowns, edicts, encyclicals, genealogies, religious connections and beliefs, and supposed hidden agendas.

In each case, once the unsuspecting reader has carefully viewed all the supposed "evidence" which charges that the one being "exposed" is indeed the "Antichrist," many are convinced. To them they have found the mysterious, undercover person who will suddenly thrust upon the world scene in the last days, to work horrible mischief against God and His people.

All such works are based upon (and this is axiomatic) a FALSE ASSUMPTION, carelessly taken for granted. Once the false assumption becomes not an assumption, but "fact" in the mind of writer, all the dozens of "proofs" seem to take on substance.

Working from this preconceived bias, researchers "find" all kinds of seemingly cogent evidence in support of their assumption. Even the numbers of bars on a shield of heraldry (especially the number 6 or any multiple thereof), the kinds of animals (unicorns, lions, bears, eagles, oxen) displayed on state seals or badges; the dates of birth, dates of significant actions - all become part of an elaborate many-pronged structure of straws, which, taken together, (once the underlying false assumption becomes "fact.") seem to offer convincing proof, yet remains merely a strawman.

Numerology is especially important to those who pretend to have uncovered the "Antichrist."

Believe it or not, the Bible says nothing about a specific individual called the "Antichrist."

For centuries theologians have assumed that there is a direct connection between the "man of sin" mentioned by Paul in 2 Thessalonians and the "spirit of Antichrist" mentioned by the apostle John. While there may be some reason to connect the so-called "Antichrist" with the "man of sin" or the great false prophet of prophecy, such connection is indirect, perhaps merely implied, and not based upon any specific "Thus saith the Lord."

Notice the description of "Antichrist" by the apostle John: "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.

*"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 made manifest that they were not all of us"* (1 John 2: 18-22).

"They" are obviously former members of God's true church, who became apostate. Notice there were "many antichrists." This is fatal to the dozens of books mentioned above, who specify some one individual, church, government, or organization. Each insists upon having found that ONE person or group who represents the Antichrist."

However, John uses the term in a broad, general sense, applying it to defectors who were once in fellowship with the true church, but who became apostate. He is saying they were hostile to Christ, contrary to Christ, "against" Christ and His teaching. To encompass this thought, he chose his own newly coined expression "Antichrist." But he said THERE ARE MANY antichrists!

*Never* did he say the so-called "Antichrist" was just one man! Certainly, he never applied it to a system, a church, a belief, a conspiracy, or a government!

Later, he warned, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits* whether they are 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 it in the world!

"Ye are of God. little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1John 4 : 1-4 ). Here, John calls the "Antichrist" an "it." Not "he."

His reference to "he that is in the world" seems obvious --- Satan the devil. "He that is in you" refers to the indwelling presence of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Since the "Spirit of Antichrist" was ALREADY IN THE WORLD during the time of John, and since the passages in John's epistles are not applied to one specific person, then it is obvious it could not apply to any of those who have been labeled "the Antichrist" down through history.

Clearly, John is saying that any "Spirit" which is hostile to Jesus Christ of Nazareth and His gospel is CONTRARY to Christ; is against Christ; therefore is "*anti*-christ." He does not identify any one specific person, nor does he attempt to do so. Rather, he characterizes his newly-coined term "Antichrist" as a contrary, adversarial SPIRIT, meaning attitude of mind, as well as an evil spirit from Satan, or Satan himself, but does NOT identify anyone single individual.

Notice another important example: "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from. the beginning, ye should walk in it.

"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." (2 John 6, 7).

*Here is the key* to understanding what John meant.

The "spirit of antichrist" is that of one who refuses to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Did the popes of antiquity, or U.S. Presidents, or the Prince of Wales go about denying that Christ came in the flesh, or that He is capable of coming in the flesh today?

### **What Did John Mean?**

The expression "who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" according to the apostle John, is the identifying sign of who is "a deceiver and an antichrist." Therefore, it is of primary importance to understand what John meant.

The original Greek, transliterated, says, "Because many deceivers entered into the world, who not confessing Jesus anointed coming in flesh, this is the deceiver and the antichrist."

The Greek word for "coming" is *erehomai* of which Strong's says, er-khom-ahee; mid. Of a prin. Verb (used only in the pres. And imperf. Tenses, the others being supplied by a kindred [mid.].) (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, p. 32, Greek Dictionary*).

It is used in the "present progressive" sense; that is, in the "aorist," and strongly implies "is coming" in the flesh, meaning that one who denies that Christ, through the power of the Spirit, can NOW DWELL IN US is one who is of the spirit of antichrist."

This is *all important*, for it goes to the very heart of the way to salvation!

The miracle of the indwelling presence of Christ is mentioned very often in God's word.

Paul wrote, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you*. Now *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*."

"And *if Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies *by his Spirit that dwelleth in you*" (Romans 8:9-11).

Jesus Christ is the FIRSTborn among "many BRETHREN"! Paul wrote, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the *firstborn among many brethren*" (Romans 8:29). He is called the "firstfruits" from the dead:

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:22, 23).

Jesus Christ is ALIVE today. Through the power of the spirit, He is able to enliven, ennoble, vivify the repentant Christian; to DWELL within the minds and hearts of those who repent of sin, are baptized, and receive the laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Listen to the beautiful words of Paul to the Ephesian church; "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself;

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one *all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Ephesians 1:7-10).

The entire plan of salvation is encompassed in Christ; in His gospel, his example, his miracles, his sacrifice, and His life. Paul writes, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with *might by his Spirit in the inner man*;

"That *Christ may dwell in your hearts* by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3: 16-19).

Paul wrote to the church at Colossae: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1 :25-27).

There are dozens of scriptures which refer to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit; to the fact that Christ, by the power of the Spirit, can "live His life over again" within us! Therefore, Christ IS NOW COMING IN THE FLESH in the sense that he is LIVING within converted Christians, who are to be remade in His image! Those who DENY this miracle; the very PURPOSE of human life, are of the spirit of "Antichrist."

Paul said, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" ( 1 Corinthians 2:16).

Paul urged the Philippians to allow Christ to dwell more fully within them: "*let this mind be in you*, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

The whole plan of salvation can be summed up in the fact that God is *recreating after His own kind*! At creation, Elohim (in the person of the one who became Christ in the flesh: John 1; Hebrews 1) said "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26).

Few, if any, of the nominal "Christian" churches understand this simple, yet almost incomprehensible truth. Most are angered by it!

Jesus Christ was accused by the Jews of "making Himself EQUAL WITH GOD." He told them, "Verily verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). They were so furious! "Then took they up stones to

cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (John 8:59).

Today, the majority of the nominal Christian churches REJECT the priceless truth that man can be BORN OF GOD and become a member of the FAMILY OF *ELOHIM*! This truth INFURIATES them!

They reject it completely! Yet, your Bible says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they are the sons of God* [Christ was the Son of God; the FIRSTborn among MANY BRETHREN who are also sons of God!].

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [Greek: "sonship" implying more than legal adoption; actual sons] whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the *children of God*!

"And if childless then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8: 14-17).

Why should these plain scriptures make many nominal Christians FURIOUS? To them, it is blasphemy to say that God is recreating after His own kind', that Christians can become co-heirs with Christ; that we can be BORN OF GOD by a resurrection, or an instantaneous change (1 Corinthians 15:50-52). And of what spirit are those who DENY that Christ IS PRESENTLY COMING IN THE FLESH? THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST!

### **New Spiritual Creature**

You and I have a human spirit. Paul wrote, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with *our spirit*, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). That spirit, only conscious when it is attached to the brain, is what gives man his humanity. It is where conscience, will, capacity for love and emotion reside; where our decision-making ability dwells.

It is only because of the human *spirit* that we are superior to the animals. While evolutionists may call mankind the "hairless ape," man is NOT AN ANIMAL. There is a VAST difference between the human mind, with the human spirit; and mere animal brain.

Most have been deceived into believing the human spirit is a "soul" which has both consciousness and immortality. This is a lie. The words immortal soul," or immortality of the soul" are nowhere in the Bible. For a complete understanding of how the human spirit is ASLEEP when death to the body occurs, write or call for my booklet, *When I Die, What Happens Next?*

The human spirit gives us the ability to think, reason, feel a vast range of emotions, from hatred to love, from vindictiveness to compassion. It is the innermost psyche; it is what gives us our personality. Notice, "*...there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*" (Job 32:8).

The life of your father witnesses with the life of your mother that you are the child of them both. It took those two lives to produce your one life. When Paul explains that the Spirit of God witnesses with our human spirit that we are the children of God, he meant what he said. But most think "children of God" is merely a smarmy "spiritual" title; an honorary, gratuitous appellation. They do not think of it as LITERAL. When a smiling young wife tells her husband they are expecting, he does not think of it as a nebulous, "spiritual" something. No, he understands that their two lives have combined in her womb to PRODUCE A HUMAN CHILD!

When God's word says we become a *child of God*, it means what it says!

Paul put it this way: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they are the sons of God*" (Romans 8:14).

God has "begotten" them by implanting HIS SPIRIT within them; connecting His spirit with their human spirit, and so creating *a new spiritual creature*! Look again at what you just read about becoming God's sons:

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (literally: "Sonship"), whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (ibid. V. 15).

You refer to your human father as "father" because that *is what he is*. When we address our heavenly Father as "Father" we do so because that *is what He Is!* He is quite literally our FATHER who has begotten us!

Notice again what Paul said: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and *joint-heirs with Christ*; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:14-17).

What has Christ inherited? Why, the whole universe -- the POWER of God -- ETERNAL LIFE! If you and I are "joint-heirs" with Christ, we are to share, equally, in His inheritance!

Notice a little-read yet vitally important scripture: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, *he is a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

When you were conceived in your mother's womb, you became *a new creature*. Yet, your father and mother gave you, through the incredible, miraculous power of creation itself, the pattern, called DNA by science, which would determine your general physiognomy; your color and texture of skin, hair, and eyes; your stature; even inherited gifts and talents, such as a penchant for music or athletics.

So it is in the creation of "a new creature in Christ." Through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, called the "mind of Christ" each newly-forming spirit takes on the characteristics of the Father; of the Family from which it came.

You became a partaker of the very nature of your parents. Do you have an older brother? You share very similar characteristics -- those of the family from which you both were created.

God says to us, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these *ye might be partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:3, 4). Just as you are a partaker of the very *nature* of your human parents, so you can become a partaker of the very divine nature of the Family of God.

### **God Is A FAMILY Of Divine Beings**

Our English language is of entirely pagan origin. The English word "God," comes down to us through the old Germanic language, *Gott*, and an ancient Anglo-Saxon word, *gheiu*.

But the Hebrew name for the English "God" rendered in Genesis 1:1 is *Elohim*.

*Elohim* is a PLURAL name; connoting more than one. This is why *Elohim* said, "Let US make man in OUR image" (Genesis 1:26). Unless one understands the basic truth that God is *recreating after His own kind*, one cannot truly grasp the breathtaking human potential; the real meaning of salvation and eternal life!

Millions are deceived into believing the false doctrine of the "immortality of the soul" This locks them into a superstition which vastly LIMITS the relationship between their concept of a conscious "soul" and God. It is as

if they hope to become some lesser being; like a plaything; a toy, a convenient, lovable, adoring creature of some kind which continually praises and exalts God, making Him happy. Like an old faithful dog, lying on the rag rug by the fireplace, looking up in adoring subservience upon hearing the master's tread, and thumping its tail on the rug to signify its happiness, many seem to believe they are destined to become angelic-like beings, worshiping God, but never remotely attaining anywhere near the same capacities.

Most utterly reject the divinely-revealed truth that man can become a member of the divine family of *Elohim*.

The familial titles used in the Bible were not invented by smarmy theologians who wished people to get along in church. God is revealed to us as Father and Son. Converted people are called "the children of God." Christ is called the "first begotten," and the "first born among many *brethren*." The church is called by analogy, "Jerusalem above, the *mother* of us all." She is called the "bride" of Christ, and also called Christ's "wife." People in God's church are called "brethren," or brothers and sisters.

These familial terms are divinely inspired, not inserted into the text by copyists.

The false doctrine of the "trinity" LIMITS the divine Family into "three persons," (albeit most Trinitarians say you cannot refer to the deity as a "person"). If you have not yet read my booklet which disproves the trinity from the Bible, call, or write for it immediately.

Notice how Father and Son are presented in the Word of God: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, "Hath in these last days spoken unto us *by his Son*, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, *by whom also he made the worlds*;

"Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person [Greek: "Character"] and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

"Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, *Thou art my Son*, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (Hebrews 1:1- 5).

The Bible reveals the Godhead as being composed of FATHER AND SON. The divine *Elohim* consists of both. They dwell in the SPIRIT realm, and are composed of spirit. Christ said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

The Father accomplishes His works; effects His purpose, by sending forth His SPIRIT to accomplish that work! No human mind can truly comprehend how God arts; how He works. It is only through Christ, who revealed the Father that we can even begin to comprehend.

Christ said the works he accomplished were by the power of the Father. through His Spirit which was poured out upon Christ without measure: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

"And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

"He that rejecteth me, and received not my words, hath one that judged him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

"And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:46-50).

Jesus Christ gave all credit, honor and glory to His Father in heaven. He said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: *but the Father that dwelleth in me*, he doeth the works.

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

"Verily verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:10- 13).

Father and Son. Continually, Jesus spoke of His Father; that the Father was "within" Him in the sense that they were ONE in purpose, character, will, and love. When the apostle John spoke of those who deny that Jesus Christ IS NOW COMING in the flesh, He was not saying there were adversaries who denied that Christ had ever lived, or who denied that Christ had become flesh! No, he was was saying those who "went out from us" had been nominal "Christians," who did not refute that Jesus was, or that He had been murdered and resurrected, but who denied that Christ was capable of coming into the converted Christian by the power of the Holy spirit.

John did not call the Jews "Antichrist." The Jews denied that Jesus was the Messiah; denied that He was the Son of God, the Savior. They still do. No, John said those who HAD BEEN WITHIN THE CHURCH, but who had GONE OUT, were of the "spirit of antichrist."

Remember, John never said there was then, or that there would be in the last days, any ONE PERSON who was "the antichrist." He said "there were MANY "antichrists" who have gone out into the world, and said that those who confessed not that Christ IS COMING (then and now) in the flesh is of the "spirit of antichrist."

### ***The "Man of Sin"***

It is only natural that theologians down through the centuries have seized upon John's description of those who were adversaries of Christ and applied that description to the infamous "man of sin," or the final "Great False Prophet." But this is an assumption, and not a specific scriptural connection.

Paul spoke of a "man of sin," who would actually claim to be God in the flesh!

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. and by our gathering together unto him,

"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that *man of sin* be revealed, the *son perdition*;

"Who opposeth and exaltech himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? (2 Thessalonians 2: 1-5).

A great falling away from God's true church was prophesied This does not mean a "recanting" by Protestants to Catholicism! One cannot "fall away" from deception, error, and false doctrine. One falls away *from the truth*. Obviously the falling away and the "man of sin" are directly connected. Since the man of sin, or the great false prophet "opposes" everything that is truly Godly, or bears the name of God, and calls HIMSELF "God," He is certainly an *anti!*

Yet, there is no specific Bible scripture which clearly labels the "man of sin" and the "false prophet" as "the Anti-christ." This is an *assumption*. While it may be an accurate assumption, it is nevertheless an assumption.

Clearly, there is to appear on the world scene a "great false prophet" who is to be in collusion with the Beast power, and who is responsible for the death of millions. Notice what happens, as the first major meting out of justice by Christ Himself upon His arrival back on this earth: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:19,20).

The false prophet is the head of a great false church which is in political and spiritual collusion with many nations. This church is a STATE church, one which holds sway over vast millions of people through spiritual deception.

Notice a description of this church and its leader: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sits upon many waters:

"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine (Greek: *oinos* meaning fermented wine. Grape juice does not render one drunk) of her fornication.

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and *ten horns*.

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17: 1- 5).

A woman is metaphor for a church. In this case, it is a great FALSE church, which commits "fornication," meaning she has political, social, economic and spiritual concourse; interstate relations; with many heads of state. The names of blasphemy are appropriated from God Himself, and are such terms as "holy" and "father" and "most holy."

She is a church of "mystery" religion; a church which favors purple and scarlet colors for her leaders.

Notice the incontrovertible evidence of her location: "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are *seven mountains*, on which the woman sitteth" (Revelation 17:9).

Rome is famous for its "seven hills" Rome calls itself "the eternal city.

"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (Revelation 17:10,11). Halley's Bible Handbook says of these passages, "Seven kings: five are fallen; one is; one is yet to come, this, further, indicates Rome. At the time this was written, five world empires had fallen; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece. One is: Rome. One yet to come; Babylon the harlot.

"An eighth is of the seven. This looks like a revival of the beast, after the seven heads and ten horns have passed, perhaps pointing to the final form antichrist will assume."

Halley then says, "an apostate Church on the throne of a World Empire: This description of Babylon the Great Harlot, seated on the seven-headed, ten-horned beast, while it may have ultimate reference to a situation yet to appear, exactly fits papal Rome. Nothing else in world history does fit.

"This desire for world power began to manifest itself in the church, on a broad scale, in the 4th century, when the Roman Empire increased its persecutions and made Christianity its state religion. The spirit of Imperial Rome passed into the church. The church gradually developed itself into the pattern of the empire it had conquered." (Ibid. P. 731).

Exactly. In the light of the above, notice the prophecies about the "image" of the Beast."

"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*.

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should *make an image to the beast*, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

"And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:11-18).

This "lamb-like" beast masquerades as Christ! It is a false Christ, speaking Satan's deceptions!

The "image of the beast" is the ecclesiastical counterpart of the Imperial Roman government; a church which adopted the pattern of the diocese, the great diocese, and the collegia or the "college of cardinals"

It is a STATE church, sending ambassadors to all nations, and maintaining, in return, offices for ambassadors from all nations. As such, it has concourse with the governments of the world. It is not at all unusual for

American presidents to stop in Rome to visit the pope when major world events are in the offing, nor is it unusual for the pope in Rome to travel the world, appearing before millions of adoring worshipers, meeting with heads of state.

Thus, the "image" or copy of the beast, (which is the Roman empire of the past, but which is also a future revival of the "Holy Roman Empire" in the heartland of Europe - probably to be called "The United States of Europe") is a STATE CHURCH. This church is NOT the outgrowth of God's true church, nor are its leaders direct successors of Peter. Peter the apostle was never in Rome. Paul's epistle to the true church in Rome makes no mention of him.

As the early church admitted into its numbers tens of thousands of pagans, it adopted the policy of papering over pagan superstitions, rites and ceremonies with a "Christian" cloak. Thus, such holidays as the "Saturnalia" were superimposed over the supposed time for the birth of Christ, which became the "Mass of Christ" or Christmas. This pagan holiday featured the symbolic evergreen tree, which stood for Nimrod, who married his mother, Semiramis.

The two of them introduced the Babylonian "mystery" religion.

In celebration of the winter solstice, the pagans appealed to *Solis Invictus* (the invincible sun) to begin his southerly journey once again with fires, gifts, riotous celebrations and pagan symbols. The apostate church then embraced the pagan celebration of "Ishtar" (silent "h"), or Asthtaroth, the ancient name for Semiramis, and the fable of the resurrection of her husband/son, Nimrod, at the time of the spring equinox. Sex symbols such as the rabbit, eggs, and the lily were utilized. Eventually, the church ruled that "Ishtar" (pronounced "Easter") must be celebrated at a set time in the spring, thus outlawing the Christ-inspired Lord's Supper (ancient "passover"), which was to be observed on the 14th of Abib or Nisan.

For centuries, persecuted, fleeing, hiding members of God's true church continued to observe the symbols of Christ's beaten body and shed blood exactly as He had commanded (John 13:15). As a result, they were labeled "Quartodecimans," or "Fourteenthers." - For centuries, the apostate church sought to eradicate these people. The penalty for being caught observing the original Lord's Supper (Passover) was often death.

The apostate church set down rules following the Council of Nicaea which required that all those who had continued to observe the Passover (Lord's Supper) on the 14th of Nisan were to be excommunicated. A Greek version of one canon says, "We also send you (the Council was writing to the Alexandrian church and Egypt) the good news of the settlement concerning the holy pasch (Greek for Passover), namely that in answer to your prayers this question also has been resolved. All the brethren in the east (Note: This means those in Palestine, and modern-day Turkey; churches where the Apostle Paul had been active two centuries earlier) who have hitherto followed the Jewish practice (meaning observing the Lord's Supper on the 14th of Nisan) will henceforth *observe the custom of the Romans...*"

Thus it was by official decree that the first great "ecumenical" synod of the apostate church forbade the observance of the Passover (Lord's Supper) as Christ had commanded.

Little by little, every custom which was supposedly "Jewish" INCLUDING THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH Was eradicated by the visible church, but was observed by isolated groups in the Mideast and Europe, as well as in the British Isles.

By the end of the 2nd century, leading bishops began to be called "Metropolitans." Eventually the bishop of Rome became the "pope" The church adopted the pagan Roman diocese and great diocese, and adopted the colors of harlotry.

Halley wrote, "Popes claim to hold on earth the place of God, to have supreme authority over the human conscience, to forgive sin, to grant indulgences, and that obedience to them is necessary for salvation. How could anything be more blasphemous?"

"Scarlet (17:3, 4) color of the beast and the Harlot, and also of the dragon (12:31), is the color of the papacy. The papal throne is scarlet. It is borne by twelve men clad in scarlet. The Cardinal's hats and robes are scarlet... 'drunk with the blood of martyrs' [17:6]. The horrors of the inquisition, ordered and maintained by the popes, over a period of 500 years, in which unnumbered millions were tortured and burned, constitute the MOST BRUTAL, BEASTLY and DEVILISH PICTURE (sic) in all history.

"It is not pleasant to write these things. It is inconceivable that any ecclesiastical organization, in its mania for power, could have distorted, desecrated and corrupted, for its own exaltation, the beautiful and holy religion of Jesus, as the papacy has done.

"But facts are facts. And history is history. And, most amazing of all, it seems exactly prefigured in Revelation. No wonder John's vision made him sick at heart [10:10]." (*Halley's Bible Handbook*, p. 712).

But the "image of the Beast" may be LITERAL, as well as typical, and historical.

Which great church is it which features, according to them, statues which bleed, or weep, or talk? Which church is it which claims to have "relics" and "artifacts" which are supposedly holy, and which have magical healing powers?

Anciently, Nebuchadnezzar caused a huge image of himself to be built and set up. It was to be worshiped! Details are found in Daniel's 3rd chapter. What if there is yet to be a LITERAL "image of the beast" set up in Jerusalem as an object of worship? The scripture says, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Revelation 13: 15).

Anciently, this was the papacy during more than 500 years when hundreds of thousands were put to death for refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the popes. But what if the literal fulfillment of this prophecy is to be a *literal image*, which, through the deceptive power of Satan, is heard to speak? Like a scene out of *The Wizard of OZ* the great image, perhaps so large it rivals the famous colossus of Rhodes, could be heard to make great pronouncements; become an object of WORSHIP. This is speculation, of course, but not impossible.

### ***The Woman Who Rides And Controls The Beast***

Revelation 17 depicts a great false church, called "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," which controls the Beast!

We need not wonder about the 10 horns seen by John on the head of the beast, for he plainly tells us what they mean: "And the ten horns which thou sawest *are ten kings*, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

"These have one mind [one purpose; one policy; they are in complete agreement], and shall give their power and strength unto the beast [the power and strength of a king or despot is the power of his raw materials and mineral resources, his economy, his people, and his military], "these shall *make war with the Lamb*, and the Lamb shall overcome them [this DATES the prophecy, showing there will be a huge ten-nation military power extant at the time of the second coming of Christ which will FIGHT Christ as He descends to the Mount of Olives]: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues [it is a universal church; a church which embodies many different nations and languages].

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

"For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

"And the woman which thou sawest is *that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth*" (Revelation 17:10-18). This can only be said of one city. It is the so-called "eternal city" of **Rome!** Revelation 18 describes how the beast power will ultimately turn against the great universal church and destroy it.

Now, you know what the Bible says about the "man of sin" or the great "false prophet" who is in collusion with the military dictator of ten nations, the "beast." Time and time again, your Bible says this evil combine will prevail right up until the time of the second coming of Christ. Notice several proofs: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth [this was ROME, which was to have many resurrections, including an end-time resurrection of ten nations]: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had *ten horns*."

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots [the "little horn" is the papacy, which overthrew the Vandals, Ostrogoths and Heruli, and eventually revealed the deadly wound" of Rome, reestablishing the empire in 554 AD]: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things [said of the "image of the beast" or the great false church, which thinks to change times and laws].

"I beheld *till the thrones were cast down [the overthrow of earthly governments], and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire [the second coming of Christ]*."

"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:7-10). So the "little horn" or the smaller government which is a STATE CHURCH prevails until the time of God's intervention in world affairs; until the time of the second coming of Christ.

Notice further, "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Daniel 7: 11). This is exactly what we read in Revelation 19:20, where Christ personally casts the beast and false prophet into Gehenna fire.

This is the second time in Daniel 7 where the prophecy begins centuries ago, and culminates in the time of the second coming of Christ. But there are more: "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:12- 14). There are still more examples: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.

"But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (Daniel 7:17,18). With these few words, Daniel's prophecies extend from the time of the ancient kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar until the time of the second coming of Christ, and co-rulership with His saints.

In most cases, the second coming of Christ is accompanied by prophecies about the great false prophet who will be persecuting God's church!

"And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows [this "little horn" is the papacy].

"I beheld, and *the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;*

"Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Daniel 7:20-22). The fact that the false prophet PREVAILS AGAINST the Saints absolutely proves that the saints of God will NOT be hidden in caves, as mere spectators on the world scene. Notice another prophecy which says virtually the same thing: "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things [almost the exact language of Daniel's prophecy about the "little horn"] and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months [three and one-half years].

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

"And it was given unto him to *make war with the saints, and to overcome them;* and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Revelation 13:5-7). Many will be MARTYRED for the sake of Christ! This is precisely what happens to the two greatest prophets of all time, the "Two Witnesses" who will prophesy in Jerusalem (Revelation 11:7, 8).

Now, review what you have learned:

- (1) John said those who "went out from us" were of the spirit of antichrist."
- (2) He said MANY "antichrists" had gone out into the world even then, in the 1st century.
- (3) He said those who deny that Christ IS NOW COMING in the flesh; that Christ can dwell in the hearts and minds of Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit, are of the spirit of "antichrist."
- (4) "Antichrist" merely means "against Christ" contrary to "Christ," "adversarial to Christ. Never was the term applied to just one man in scripture.
- (5) The "false prophet" or "man of sin" is NEVER called "antichrist" in the book of Daniel, or in the book of Revelation.
- (6) Paul never uses the term. Luke never used the term in the book of Acts. Neither James nor Peter ever used the term.
- (7) "Antichrist" is a term coined by John in two of his three letters to apply to FORMER MEMBERS OF GOD'S TRUE CHURCH who "went out from us" Like rebels against Christ; like adversaries, they then began to RESIST Christ and His people.

The Bible nowhere applies John's term to any one single man; not in history, and not in prophecy. Yet, theologians from very early on have invariably applied the term "antichrist" to the "man of sin" mentioned by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2. The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, under the article "Antichrist" says, "A second view admits that the antichrist is a person, but it maintains that he is a person of the past; Nero, Diocletian, Julian, Caligula, Titus, Simon

Magus, Simon the son of Giora, the High Priest Ananias, Vitellius, the Jews, the Pharisees, and the Jewish zealots have been variously identified..." (Vol. 1. p. 561). Probably more than one hundred individuals have been singled out as being "the Antichrist" down through history.

Today, confusion reigns supreme. Always anxious to be the one to discover some scintillating, mysterious new thing, many writers put forth dozens of theories about just who is the "Antichrist."

IF the Bible suggests that we should apply the term "Antichrist" to the coming false prophet, well and good. But there are many prophetic scriptures which predict the actions of the great false prophet who will be in collusion with the beast, so that those who are truly WATCHING world events will KNOW when he appears on the world scene.

One need not go far a field to search for some one individual who is the "Antichrist."

Again, here is what John said: "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.

They [those who were 'antichrists'] 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 [those who were 'antichrists'] went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:18, 19).

Clearly, John applies to the term far more to THOSE WHO FELL AWAY, and those who WENT OUT OF THE TRUE CHURCH more than to any one single individual

**-End-**

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