

ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Topical Bulletin, November 2018

In this month's Topical Bulletin, the question that will be addressed is: ***What does the Holy Bible teach concerning the antichrist?***

The first thing to recognize is that the term "antichrist" is used five times in the Holy Bible, four times in the singular and once in the plural. Thus, the Bible informs us about THE ANTICHRIST and also the existence of many ANTICHRISTS, for we read in **1 John 2:18**, "**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.**" The definition of the term "antichrist" is best observed by looking at the original Greek term, which is as follows: ἀντιχριστος {an-tee'-khris-tos}, meaning, "a) an opponent of Christ *antichrist* ; & b) as a proper noun for Christ's adversary in the end-times *Antichrist.*" [Friberg's Greek/English Lexicon]

Comment: according to the inspired Word of God as found in 1 John 2:18, there were many antichrists in early New Testament times and they will continue to be present throughout the entire New Testament era which is the "last time". Note well that we are currently in the final period of this world's history; the next great event will be Jesus Christ's visible return to judge the quick and the dead. Observe also that during this last time THE GREAT ANTICHRIST — Jesus Christ's chief end-times adversary — who was foretold to come, will come and be present in this world.

The characteristics of all antichrists can be known from the following pertinent passages of Holy Scripture.

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." (1 John 2:22 KJV)

Comment: A person is an ANTICHRIST if that person denies that JESUS, the man of Nazareth who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, is THE CHRIST, the promised Messiah. The word "Messiah" is from the Hebrew and the word "Christ" is from the Greek, and both terms mean "anointed" and apply to Jesus, "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3:34 KJV) For "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts 10:38 KJV) Thus, the man Jesus Christ fully possesses the Holy Spirit, and anyone who denies that fact is antichrist.

Indeed, Holy Writ reports that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9 KJV) And, Simon Peter rightly confessed to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16 KJV) Hence, an antichrist does not hold and teach that Jesus is the Christ, for an antichrist will point people away from Jesus who is true God with a capital "G", and will point people to another who is a false god— god with a lower case "g". Observe also that an antichrist by his or her denial that Jesus is the Christ, also thereby denies God the Father, for it is written: "Whosoever

denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." (1 John 2:23 KJV) So, an antichrist does not hold to or proclaim the true Father God since an antichrist denies the Father's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Hence, it's obvious there are many antichrists today. For example, the Jewish religion denies that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, as they continue to look for another. Likewise, Islam denies that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh, for they simply view Jesus as a mere man and not true and very God. The so-called Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach that Jesus is less than the Father, and thereby they do not believe and teach that Jesus is the Christ in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells. Thus, all antichrists are LIARS and consequently servants of the devil, "for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44 KJV)

"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." (1 John 4:1-3 KJV)

Comment: Notice that Christians are to be on guard against false prophets, spirits who are not of God since they deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh— such spirits being that of antichrist rather than being motivated by the Holy Spirit of God. Antichrists deny that "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Timothy 3:16 KJV) Yes, antichrists deny that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God, that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:1-2, 14 KJV) Sadly, there are many folks which call themselves Christians and yet by their actions they deny Jesus Christ is GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, for they willingly accept, defend, and use one of the modern perversions of the Holy Bible, such as the NIV, which in 1 Timothy 3:16 simply states in reference to Jesus: "He appeared in the flesh." My friends, it's no mystery that a man named Jesus appeared in the flesh; the mystery is that Jesus IS GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH! The wonderful truth is: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16 KJV)

"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 1:7 KJV)

Comment: Observe again the emphasis on the fact that antichrists deny that Jesus Christ is both true God and true man. The deceivers, the antichrists, fail to believe, confess, and teach, that "concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Romans 9:5 KJV)

Bearing the aforementioned Scripture quotes and comments in mind, we will now consider the antichrist in the singular, THE GREAT ANTICHRIST — Jesus Christ's chief end-times adversary — who

was foretold to come. The antichrist has actually come and is still active in the present-day world during these last days, as we shall clearly see as we examine the following Scripture verses.

“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 of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 KJV)

Comment: That the foregoing Scripture verses from 2nd Thessalonians 2 are written concerning the Antichrist is evident from the following personal terms descriptive of the individual: *that man of sin; the son of perdition; that Wicked; and him, whose coming is after the working of Satan.* Furthermore, the individual who *opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God* thereby shows himself to be THE ANTICHRIST — Jesus Christ’s chief end-times adversary — who was foretold to come.

The marks or distinguishing traits of the Antichrist are described in detail in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, as will presently be enumerated.

1) Observe that the spiritual condition of the Antichrist and those who follow him is “a falling away” — ἀποστασία {ap-os-tas-ee'-ah} apostasy — from “the truth” and the clinging to a lie. And what is the truth? Jesus Christ answers, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6 KJV) And, Jesus in His high-priestly prayer to God the Father, says, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17 KJV) So, the Antichrist is opposed to Jesus Christ the living Word of God and is opposed to the written Word of God. JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY TO GOD AND HEAVEN, JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY SAVIOR OF SINNERS, but the Antichrist opposes that truth by teaching the lie of another supposed method by which sinners can be saved.

2) The Antichrist “opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” Accordingly, the Antichrist is not merely a political ruler in this world; rather, the Antichrist claims for himself the highest position in the Holy Christian Church; the Antichrist arrogantly declares he is superior to all others and is to be recognized as God.

3) The Antichrist is not Satan himself, but rather his “coming is after the working of Satan with all

power and signs and lying wonders.” Indeed, the Antichrist and his kingdom are built and backed by all sorts of powers, signs, and lying wonders— things that appear to be miraculous.

4) The Antichrist will be present on earth until Jesus Christ visibly returns in Judgment at the end of days, at which time “the Lord shall consume [him] with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy [him] with the brightness of his coming.”

Accordingly, the marks of Antichrist perfectly describe the Roman Pontiff— the pope of Rome and his papacy. One pope rules at a time in succession from the papal throne with the same devilish doctrines and practices continued year after year under the cloak of a holy, pious appearance; consequently, he who occupies the papal chair is *that man of sin; the son of perdition*.

1) Now, someone may object and say that the pope does not deny that Jesus is the Christ, or that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, for the pope leads people to confess the Apostle’s Creed and so forth. Nevertheless, the pope by additional words and actions actually denies Jesus is the Christ, the Savior anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, the Savior come in the flesh who is at the same time true and very God, the Savior who is the only Way to God and heaven.

The papacy denies the true Jesus Christ by teaching that one is NOT saved by God’s grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ, but rather that one is saved by faith PLUS one’s own works commanded by the pope! The Word of God says: “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (Romans 3:21-28; John 3:36 KJV)

On the other hand, the papacy teaches: “If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ’s sake, or that it is this trust alone by which we are justified, let him be anathema. If anyone says that the received righteousness is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works but that the works are only the fruit and signs of the justification obtained, not also a cause of its increase; let him be anathema.” [Council of Trent, Session 6, Canons 12 & 24] Thus, the pope of Rome reveals himself to be the Antichrist by his cursing all those who place their hope of salvation in JESUS CHRIST alone. The pope is responsible for leading multitudes away from the truth. **THE POPE IS THE VERY ANTICHRIST.**

2) The pope dares to call himself “vicar of Christ” and “viceregent of Christ” as he sits on the papal throne claiming to be the sole ruler and authority in the Holy Christian Church. The Holy Bible declares: “Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. And he is the head of

the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.” (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18 KJV) Hence, the pope of Rome reveals himself to be the Antichrist.

3) Consider the powers, signs, and lying wonders that the papacy has displayed over the years, things such as bleeding paintings and crying statutes of Mary; supposed miraculous appearances of dead saints, and the like. So again, the pope of Rome reveals himself to be the Antichrist.

4) The papacy continues to have vast multitudes of followers despite numerous scandals and corruptions evident through the years, such as the recently reported pedophile Roman Catholic Priests in Philadelphia. Multitudes continue to honor and bow to the pope who excuses such sinful behavior. So again, we see that the pope of Rome is the Antichrist.

No other personal role matches the description given in Holy Writ of the Antichrist as does the papacy. **THE POPE IS THE VERY ANTICHRIST.**

Accordingly, the Lutheran Confessions, Smalcald Articles (Triglot page 517), correctly state: “All Christians ought to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty of the Pope. On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist; just as Christ has commanded, Matt. 7, 15: *Beware of false prophets.* And Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and execrated as cursed, Gal. 1, 8; [“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”] Titus 3, 10; [“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject.”] And 2 Cor. 6, 14 he says: *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”*

Therefore, knowing that the pope is the Antichrist, let us be on guard against his soul-destroying doctrines and practices. Let us be on guard against all antichrists— all people who attack and compromise the true Word of God and the true Jesus Christ who is the ONLY SAVIOR of sinners, for “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12 KJV) Let us by God’s grace stand firm in the faith of Jesus Christ, “grounded and settled, and *be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which [we] have heard.*” (Colossians 1:23 KJV)

m.e.l.