

## **ANTICHRISTOS**

(an-tee-chris-tos)

Tonight I'm going to talk about deception again. I talk about deception a lot because it's *the* sign of the end of the age, and also because there are different types and levels of deception. There is doctrinal or theological deception, and there is experiential deception. Of the two, experiential deception is by far the most dangerous because it's the hardest to detect. In the most famous prophetic discourse in the entire New Testament, the Lord's disciples asked Jesus to tell them what they should look for to know they have reached the end of the age and the time of His return. The very first thing Jesus mentioned was wide-spread deception; and not just any old kind of deception, but a very specific kind of deception—*religious* deception. *Christian* deception.

*And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.** For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

*Matthew 24:3-5*

So the first and most important sign of the last days is *Christian* deception. When Jesus warned the disciples not to be deceived by any *man*, He wasn't talking about being deceived by a Buddhist man, or a Hindu man, or a Muslim man, or a New Age man, or a Humanist man. He wasn't talking about being deceived by a Jehovah's Witness man, or a Mormon man, or a Seventh-Day Adventist man, or a Messianic Jewish man. He was talking about not being deceived by a *Christian* man!

The greatest religious deception in the last days will not come from Buddhism, or Hinduism, or Islam, or Judaism, or the New Age, or Humanism. The greatest religious deception will come from Christianity *itself*. Jesus said "many" people will come in *His* name and deceive "many". He didn't say they would come in the name of Buddha, or Mohammad, or Alice Baily and deceive many. He said they would come in the name of Jesus Christ, in the name of Christianity, and deceive many.

*And **many false prophets** shall rise, and shall **deceive many**. And because iniquity shall abound, the love **of many** shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. . .When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:). . .For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For **there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.** Behold, I have told you before.*

*Matthew 24:11-13; 15; 21-25*

The Lord repeatedly warned about deception throughout this discourse. He said deception will be *the* sign of the last days. He said deception will be rampant and will deceive multitudes. He said great miracles—that is, signs and wonders—will be done and they will be so compelling, they could even deceive the very elect. Deception, deception and more deception—that’s the *hallmark* of the last days. And let me repeat this very important point—it will be Christian deception.

According to Jesus, who is it that will be deceived in the last days; and who will be doing the deceiving? Who will be doing miracles so great that even the very elect could be deceived? Will it be the Mormons or the Buddhists? No! The “many” false prophets will be false *Christian* prophets; the “many” false Christ’s will be false Christian preachers and teachers; and the “many” who will be deceived by them will be Christians. They’re *all* Christians! At least, they’re all people who claim to be Christians or have identified themselves with Christianity.

It’s my conviction that the vast majority of those who call themselves Christians today do not believe, nor do they really understand, what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 24. They don’t really believe the greatest deception in the last days will be Christian deception, and that *many* of today’s *Christian* religious leaders are deceivers. The reality of what Jesus said has never penetrated their beings. In fact, in my opinion, because of all the false doctrine they have been taught, they will never be able to grasp the reality of what Jesus said in Matthew 24.

Three times in that chapter—in verses 4-5; 11; and 24—Jesus said false prophets and false Christ’s would come and deceive many. According to what Jesus actually said in this discourse, can anyone tell me *how* all these false Christ’s and false prophets are going to deceive the “many”? There is only one clear reason given, and it’s in verse 24—great signs and wonders. You can look through Matthew chapter 24 all you like and you won’t find any other cause for the deception. Now, don’t misunderstand what I’m saying here. I’m *not* saying there is no other cause for deception. I’m simply calling your attention to the fact that Jesus warned us three times that Christian deception will be the hallmark of the last days, and that this deception will be experiential deception.

Signs and wonders aren’t about doctrine and theology; they are about *experience*. They are about power. It’s not doctrine or theology that empowers you to do signs and wonders; it’s supernatural power that enables you to do them—and that power is either coming from Satan or from God because there are only two sources of supernatural power in this universe. The “flesh” has no supernatural power. So Jesus is not talking about people ministering in “the flesh”. He’s talking about people who are ministering “in the spirit”—but they are ministering in the *wrong kind* of spirit. The kind of deception Jesus warned us about three times in Matthew chapter 24 isn’t primarily doctrinal deception. It’s not about what you believe—it’s about *who* you are in union with. It’s about *who* you are yielding to. It’s about who is working *through* you. Is it God’s Spirit; or is it another spirit?

Because of all the false doctrine we have been taught, most of us don’t even consider the possibility that *we* could be one of the deceivers Jesus warned about, who will be moving under *another* spirit in the last days. We just assume He was talking about someone else—the Benny Hinn’s or the Kenneth Copeland’s or the Todd Bentley’s. Those who realize we have entered the great apostasy, look at these deceived religious leaders and assume they are in a different class or category. They think that what happened to people like Hinn or Copeland could never happen to them, especially since they know the Bible so well.

Have you noticed that many of today’s ministries—and especially the “apostasy watchers”—are focused on *doctrinal* deception. Everyone’s busy straightening out everyone else’s *doctrine*. The “spiritual yardstick” all these ministries use to judge whether or not you are false is doctrine. If the situation wasn’t so dangerous, it would

be amusing to watch all these ministers and “apostasy watchers” talk about doctrine all the time. They think they are so smart, and they don’t think they can be deceived because they know and study the Bible all the time; yet they are missing *the cause* of all the experiential deception that’s overcoming people right now. And would you like to take a guess as to why they are missing it? They are missing it because of their doctrine, which they think is so correct! You see, experiential deception involves demon spirits. Experiential deception isn’t about doctrine; it’s the result of religious spirits convincing you that *they* are the Holy Spirit.

I’m not trying to say doctrine isn’t important, or that correcting false doctrine isn’t necessary. I spend a lot of time exposing and correcting false doctrine myself. I expose false doctrine in order to open the eyes of God’s people to the reality of the demonic kingdom and how dangerous these spirits can be. I also do it in order to better explain the purpose and the goal of redemption. Both these areas of truth have been muddled in the minds of God’s people. But if you go back over my chat room messages, you will find that I talk about experiential deception almost as much as I do *doctrinal* deception.

This is not the case with most of today’s ministries, or with the “apostasy watchers”. The only thing they talk about is doctrinal deception because that’s all they know. They think the cause of every wrong thing—including the apostasy—is either wrong doctrine, or people trying to serve God “in the flesh”. They have no understanding of experiential deception or how it operates because they refuse to accept the truth regarding demon spirits. They believe genuine Christians are immune to religious spirits, and to all spirits, for that matter.

Well, since we are living in the last days, and since Jesus told us *Christian* deception would be the hallmark of these days, and since He also said this deception would be experiential in nature, I talk about religious spirits and how to recognize them because it will be religious spirits that empower the “many” false prophets and false Christ’s of our day. It will be religious spirits that move through these deceivers. When Jesus talked about the “*many*” who would be deceived by all these false prophets and false Christ’s, He’s saying that many of us will be deceived by the religious spirits who are empowering and moving through these people.

If you think the presence and work of religious spirits among today’s famous ministers is a reality the average Christian—or even the above average Christian—walks in, you’re mistaken. The only thing most of today’s Christians understand or talk about is bad doctrine and “the flesh”. They think it’s “the flesh” of someone like Rick Warren, who is responsible for him being catapulted to the top of the Evangelical food chain. They have no idea religious spirits put this apostate where he is right now. They even look at someone like Rick Joyner, who clearly manifests supernatural power and abilities, who they know is a false prophet, and they say he’s gotten to where he’s at by the power of “the flesh”. I tell you, the blindness of God’s people is incredible.

This is the reason I am continually warning people about these spirits. Unfortunately, most of today’s Christians don’t want to hear about this kind of thing because they live in a delusional world of false security. They don’t think they will ever be deceived—and certainly not by anything like “religious spirits”—so the subject of deception tends to bore them after a while. They don’t like to hear things that unsettle them, or things which question their security. In fact, they don’t like to hear anything *negative*. Their attitude is: “*Lets just talk about Jesus*”. They want to talk about positive things. They want to talk about things that edify and lift people up. They want to talk about things that bring people comfort and joy. Sorry folks, but I have no intention of standing before Jesus and hearing Him tell me I was *unfaithful* to the brethren (and to Him) because I didn’t want to pay the price to speak the unvarnished truth. I don’t want to be informed, after it’s too late to make it right, that I compromised the truth so people would like me better, or so they wouldn’t think I’m too negative.

Please notice that when Jesus was asked to describe the spiritual atmosphere of the last days, He didn't try to *lighten* the situation. He didn't try to keep a good *balance* between the “doom and gloom” aspect of the last days and the “blessing and joy” of the last days. Except for when He speaks of His actual return, it's all doom and gloom my friends. Everything about the last days is dark and dangerous. In the *spiritual* realm, the deception will be so strong, all but the very elect will succumb to it. I'd say that's pretty “gloomy”. In the *natural* realm, the tribulation will be so severe, if God doesn't cut it short, every single human being on this planet will be destroyed! Once again, I'd say that's pretty “gloomy”.

This is why I don't waste my time talking about a lot of things that I could talk about in this chat room. I'm concerned with the thing Jesus emphasized the *most* in His warning about the last days—which is *Christian* deception. The fact is, nothing will destroy more of God's people in the final hours of this age than the deception which results from *religious spirits* convincing them that they are the Holy Spirit.

That's the spiritual reality we are facing in this hour and carnal, fleshy Christians don't want to face it. They want to hear positive, uplifting and affirming messages. They want's to *ignore* the horrible realities of today and retreat into a delusional world where everything turn out fine in *this* life if you are a Christian. It's our flesh that want's to “eat, drink and be merry” while everyone around us is being deceived and taken to perdition. It's our “flesh” that wants to hang Jesus around our neck like some ornament on a Christmas tree, while our *hearts* are consumed with our marriage and our family, with our job or career, and with our hobbies and sports and entertainment. It's our flesh that doesn't want to carry the burden of the issues of the kingdom. Fleshy Christian are immature, selfish, spoiled brats who have no desire to grow up and be about their Father's business. All they want to do is have fun and play with their toys! Well, I have news for these Christians. You are in serious trouble because the end of the age is upon us and the battle between darkness and light is only going to intensify.

So tonight we're going to look at deception again because deception is *the* issue of the hour. More specifically, we're going to look at the deception that's coming from Antichrist. When we hear the term Antichrist, not only do we usually think of an individual human political leader, we also tend to think of this man as being openly “against” Christ. Strong's definition of “*antichristos*” (#500); (an-tee'-khris-tos) says: “*From 473 and 5547; an opponent of the Messiah. Antichrist is “an opponent” of Messiah. If you look further at the term “anti” (an-tee'—Strong's #473); the definition is—“a primary particle; opposite, i.e. instead or because of (rarely in addition to). Vines Expository Dictionary says this about “antichristos”:*

[It] can mean either “against Christ” or “instead of Christ”—or perhaps, combining the two—“one who, assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ” (Westcott). The word is found only in John's epistles: (a) of the many “antichrists” who are forerunners of the “Antichrist” himself (I. John 2:18, 22; II. John 7); (b) of the evil power which already operates anticipatively of the “Antichrist” (I. John 4:3).

I agree. When the spirit of Antichrist attacks the fundamentals of Christianity—like the Incarnation, the virgin birth, the sinless life of Jesus, or His physical resurrection—this is being *against* Christ openly . But when the spirit of Antichrist counterfeits the things of God in order to convince us that it is Christ, this is not being against Christ openly. Rather, it's being against Christ covertly, in the sense of *replacing* Christ in our lives. These are two very different kinds of oppositions or lines of attack. One of them is doctrinal; the other one is experiential. In the first case, Antichrist twists, distorts, or outright denies doctrinal truths about Jesus. In the second case, he counterfeits the person, presence and work of Jesus.

Mr. Vine also has a note at the end of his definition of Antichrist. He says the term “*pseudochristos*”—which means a false Christ’s (as in Matt. 24:24 & Mark 13:22) is to be distinguished from the “*antichristos*” of John’s day. Mr. Vine says that “*pseudochristos*” (false Christ’s) do not deny the existence of Christ. Rather, they trade upon the expectation of His appearance and they affirm that they are Christ. In contrast, “*antichristos*” denies the existence of the true God. With this I disagree.

If you remember, the other week we looked at an example of a Bible teacher being seduced by religious spirits with regards to Satan not being the “god” of this world. Even though this Bible teacher has been seduced, something he said in that message was true. He said there is a difference between studying the Bible intellectually and receiving spiritual illumination regarding the Scripture. I would have to agree with him on that point. I can tell what kind of “knowledge” a person has regarding Antichrist as soon as they start talking about the subject, and for the vast majority of them, their view not only *doesn’t* come from revelation knowledge, it doesn’t even come from come from an intellectual study of the Scripture regarding the subject.

You are all aware of the fact that the majority of the organized church still believes the Dispensational, Pre-tribulation Rapture view of the last days. That means, they assume Antichrist is only a “man” (a human political world leader) who is to be revealed 3½ years *after* the Rapture. In other words, they assume all Christians will be in heaven *before* the revelation of *the man* called Antichrist. Since they believe Antichrist is a man, and since they also think this man won’t be revealed until after they have been in heaven for over 3 years, the fact that they must face this powerful entity *today* is not even on their radar screens. When they hear me talking about Antichrist the way I do—like it has already been revealed and it is now wrecking havoc in the churches—such a concept does not compute because of all the error they have been taught.

There is a much smaller portion of the organized church that rejects the whole pre-tribulation rapture view, but they still tend to view Antichrist as primarily a man. Since they believe they will be here for the tribulation, they understand that they will eventually have to face this powerful political leader. But still, the reality that Antichrist is first and foremost a demonic prince, which has already been unleashed upon the church, is not a reality to most of these folks. They are waiting for the revelation of *the man* called Antichrist.

Then there is the Charismatic wing of the Church, which has been overtake by the Kingdom Now or Dominion error. Dominionism rejects the whole Dispensational/Evangelical view of Antichrist. For Dominionist’s, the Antichrist is just a religious tradition of man, based on a *defeatists view* of church history. These people live, act and preach as if there won’t even be an Antichrist—or if there is, it will be inconsequential because the Church Triumphant will blow him away. There is a strong tendency in the Charismatic church to view Antichrist not as a man, but as a spirit (or even a religious attitude) that’s equated with the Fundamentalism. Fundamentalists have the spirit of antichrist because they reject the new paradigm, and the idea of the conquering church that will overthrow Satan’s rule and establish the kingdom of God on earth, *before* Jesus returns.

When you come out of the Religious System, you’ll find that the people *out here* have a mixed bag of views regarding Antichrist. Some realize Antichrist is a spirit, some don’t. Some are still waiting for *the man* to be revealed; while others have rejected that whole idea completely. There was one sister who used to come to this room when I first opened it—if I told you her name, you would remember her—and she said that based on her study of the Scripture, she could not find *any evidence* that the entity we all call “the Antichrist” will be a single political. According to her, there is only the “the spirit of antichrist” and “many antichrists” who walk under that influence of that spirit.

Her study of the Scripture was pretty much confined to the books of First and Second John because that's the *only place* the actual term "antichrist" is found. I'm not putting this sister down. Indeed, I commend her for trying to keep her prophetic views based solidly on the Scripture. At least she took the time to study the issue out for herself—which is more than most of today's Christians will ever do. Unfortunately, for some reason, she didn't receive any *spiritual illumination* on the subject. Neither has Mr. Vine from what I can tell. So I want to show the connection between the antichrist John talked about in his day, and the Antichrist we are facing in our day. First, I want to go through the passages which actually mention the term "antichrist" and dispel some of the errors which have come from mis-interpreting them.

***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.***

*I John 4:2-3*

The first error regarding the spirit of Antichrist that I want to look at, comes from the above passage. This is the idea that the spirit of Antichrist—and this would include any person who is walking under the power and influence of that spirit—cannot possibly confess that "*Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*". This interpretation is not only spiritually immature, it's shown to be false by every day experience. Demon spirits have no problem confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh!

Everything that was written in the New Testament has a *context*. You can't just go through the Bible *ignoring* the context in which statements are made—and that includes not only the context of the passage itself, or the line of thought being developed by the writer, but the external social and cultural context of the people to whom these epistles and letters were originally written as well. John's statement must be interpreted within it's overall context and line of thought, and also, within the cultural context or the *events* that were happening at that time. If it's not, you come away with all kinds of bizarre and unscriptural ideas.

So first, we must understand what the phrase "*Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*" actually means. Then we must determine who it was that was having a problem with this truth. So what does this phrase mean, anyway? Well, who was Jesus Christ *before* he came in the flesh? He was God, right? His name was "the Word" and He was the Second Person of the Trinity. So when you say Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, you are saying "*God has come in the flesh*". In other words, this phrase is a specific reference to the *Incarnation*.

Who in John's day would have a problem with the idea or the concept of the Incarnation? Who would balk at the idea of God becoming a man, or of God becoming flesh and blood? When you read the entire epistles of First and Second John, you find that John is warning the saints about a *specific type* of person who had become part of the fellowships. There was a specific group of "Christians" who *denied* that God had come in the flesh—a denial which made them false brethren and very dangerous to be around. You can't be a true Christian and reject the Incarnation. So John gave the believers he was writing to a *doctrinal test* by which they could recognize these false brethren. He said anyone who refused to confess that Jesus Christ (God) has come in the flesh is not a true Christian and is walking under the influence of the spirit of Antichrist.

So, who were these people? Well, if you look at any good study Bible, you will find that they were *Gnostics*. Gnosticism was a system of false teachings that existed outside the Christian community before and during the early centuries of Christianity. It's name comes from "*gnosis*", the Greek word for "knowledge".

There were different kinds of Gnostic sects at the time of the Early Church, but there two fundamental beliefs were common to all of them. The first belief was that knowledge is *the way* to salvation. The Gnostics never viewed any single religion or philosophical system as the correct one. They believed every religion and philosophy contained important pieces of a grand puzzle of divine knowledge. So they would join a religious group or study a philosophy with the express intention of obtaining any secret, divine fragments of knowledge they might contain. At some point, they hoped to gain all the divine knowledge from all the then known religions and philosophies. Thus, Gnosticism was a *conglomeration* of many different doctrines and ideas.

The second fundamental belief of all Gnostic's was the conviction that the *material creation* is evil and unredeemable. They believed the material creation is *inferior* to the spirit realm, not because it fell with Adam, but because *matter itself* is evil. Only *spirit* is good. They believed the earth is surrounded by a number of cosmic spheres which separates man from God, and these spheres are ruled by "archons" (powers) who guard their areas by barring the souls who are seeking to ascend from the realm of captivity (the material creation) which is below, to the realm of light (the spiritual creation) which is above.

The Gnostics also believed that man is composed of body, soul and spirit. Since the body is comprised of *matter*, it was considered evil and unredeemable. The soul, because it is closely knit to the body and our earthly existence in general, was also viewed as evil, yet it was also seen as being redeemable. The spirit was viewed as the only divine substance of man. They saw the spirit as being asleep or ignorant, needing only to be awakened and liberated by "gnosis" (knowledge). Thus, the Gnostic goal of salvation was for the spirit to be awakened by knowledge so the inner man could be released from his earthly dungeon (the material creation) and return to the realm of light (the spiritual creation), where the soul becomes reunited with God.

Since the Gnostic view of matter, or the material creation, was that it is evil and unsalvageable, the *Incarnation* was an absolute impossibility for them. They could accept many of the teachings of Christianity; but they could never accept the idea that God could take upon Himself a *physical* body. To accept this truth would be the same as rejecting one of the foundations of their belief system. St. Augustine would later write that in the pagan philosophers—which included all the various Gnostic sects—he could find parallels for everything in the New Testament except for one concept: "*The Word became flesh*".

It was the spirit of Antichrist who led the Gnostics in their religious pursuits, so it was the spirit of Antichrist who originally gave them the two views that knowledge equals salvation and the material creation is evil. Therefore, it was the spirit of Antichrist in them that made them deny the possibility of God becoming flesh. When John said: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God"—he was giving the believers of his day a "test" that could help them detect and expose *Gnostic Christians*.

However, John never meant for us to think that this "test" would be sufficient in *every* situation. He wasn't telling us that we could apply this test to everyone, in all circumstances, in all ages. Nor was he saying the spirit of Antichrist is *limited* to denying the Incarnation, or that the only thing a person who is under the control of the spirit of Antichrist will ever do is deny the Incarnation. All he was saying was that in his day, the spirit of Antichrist was manifesting itself *that way*. So he gave the brethren a *specific kind* of test that was designed to expose those who

were part of that specific group of people. Not only was this test inappropriate for *other* errors and false doctrines in John's day, it's even more inappropriate in our day because with some notable exceptions, nobody in our day has a problem confessing that God became a man—including Roman Catholics and a large portion of America's *unregenerate* population!

I want you to think of a Christian minister who you consider to be utterly false and of the devil, and then consider whether or not this man (or woman) denies the *Incarnation*. Take Kenneth Copeland for example. I think most of you in this room, and who listen to me off the web, realize that Kenneth Copeland is not only a false teacher but a blasphemer as well. Does Kenneth Copeland deny the Incarnation? Does he deny that "God (Jesus Christ) has come in the flesh"? Absolutely not. How about Rick Warren, another apostate. Does he deny the Incarnation? Absolutely not. Indeed, you can go down any list of famous false prophets, apostles and teachers you have, and you'll be hard pressed to find *one* that denies the Incarnation. They *all* confess that "God has come in the flesh".

Of course, I realize there are a few very liberal denominations who deny the Incarnation. But that doesn't matter because I'm *not* trying to say nobody deny's the Incarnation today. Certainly there are people who do. My point is that the visible church is *full* of false prophets, false apostles, and false teachers who acknowledge the Incarnation. The church is full of people who are walking under the power and the influence of the spirit of Antichrist, and all of them can easily confess or acknowledge that God has come in the flesh.

I've also heard other explanations of this passage, particularly from ministers outside the system, who say the phrase "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" has nothing to do with the Incarnation. They say John was really talking about the spirit of Antichrist not being able to confess that Jesus *is* coming in YOUR flesh and in MY flesh—in this case, flesh means the person, not the sin nature. In other words, according to these ministers, the spirit of Antichrist can acknowledge that Jesus Christ (God) took on a flesh and blood body. But it can't (or won't) acknowledge that Jesus Christ (God) is being *formed* "in" many flesh and blood bodies (ie: you and me).

This all sounds very spiritual, but again, it won't stand the test of reality. I don't know of any of today's false prophets or apostles who deny the concept of Christ being "*formed* in" us. Indeed, some of these ministers preach such a message! So the ministers who are trying to say, "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" means people reject the idea of Christ (God) being formed in flesh and blood, aren't even doing their homework. All of today's false ministers at least acknowledge this truth and some of them actually preach it. They may not fully understand what it all means, they may be teaching it under a *wrong* spirit, but they certainly do not deny it. Therefore, if you tried to use John's test on them, they would pass such a test with flying colors!

We need to look at another important point that John brings out in this same passage. He said every spirit that refused to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. Then he said: "*...and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world*". He was talking specifically about a "spirit" in this passage—a religious demon spirit. He said this is "*that spirit*" that should come. This is "*that spirit*" they were warned about.

In other words, someone had told them these brethren that a SPIRIT would come in the future, and his name was Antichrist. I find this very interesting because you can count the number of today's preachers or teachers who are warning God's people about a SPIRIT named Antichrist with the fingers on just one hand. Very few even understand that there is such a spirit in existence today. Well, John informed these brethren that Antichrist had already come. Why did he have to tell them it had already come? Why didn't they realize it had come?

*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.*

*I John 2:18-19*

John said: "...ye have heard that antichrist (singular) shall come". That's twice now, he said these brethren had been warned about an entity named Antichrist, that was to come in the future. Then he says: "...*even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time*". In other words, these brethren were warned about an entity named Antichrist, which would be a spirit, which would come in the "last time".

Apparently, John was familiar with what they had been taught. Also, he recognized that this spirit had already come and was at work in the fellowships. So he told them they were in the last time back then. He said they could know they were in the last time because the entity they had been warned about had *already* begun to move and work in their churches. His purpose for telling them this was not to deny the teaching they had already received regarding the coming of a *singular* entity named Antichrist. He wasn't trying to replace the idea of a single antichrist with the idea of plural antichrists. His point was to let them know they were in *the last time* back then, and the entity they had been warned about had come.

Sound familiar? John was faced with the same kind situation *we* are facing today. People in his day were looking for a singular entity named Antichrist to arise, but they couldn't recognize *the spirit* of Antichrist when it began moving in their midst. Today, God's people are doing the same thing! They are looking for a singular entity named Antichrist to arise, but they can't recognize *the spirit* of Antichrist that's freely moving in their midst right now. That spirit is working right under *our* noses and we can't see it; just like it was working right under the noses of the brethren in John's day and they couldn't see it. Back then, Antichrist was simply denying the Incarnation. Today it's counterfeiting the person, presence and work of the Holy Spirit.

*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.***

*II. John 1:1-6*

In John's second letter, he re-states the same basic idea regarding the spirit of Antichrist refusing to confess that Jesus is come in the flesh. Only this time, his emphasis isn't on the spirit so much as it is on the MEN who are walking under the influence of that spirit. He said many deceivers have entered the world. Notice what he says after warning the brethren about those who are walking under the influence of this spirit. He says: "*Look to yourselves, that we **lose not those things** which we have wrought, but that we receive **a full reward***" (II. John 1:8). He tells the brethren they must pay attention to what they are doing so they won't "lose" the things they have gained, but "receive a full reward". In other words, John is warning the brethren that this SPIRIT could cause them to lose the things they have wrought in Christ. A demon spirit named Antichrist could keep them from receiving the full reward Jesus has prepared for them and purchased for them at Calvary. So much for "package deal" Christianity!

*I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that **denieth that Jesus is the Christ**? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. **Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father**: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

*I. John 2:21-23*

Here we see another tactic of Antichrist, which is another frontal attack on doctrinal truth—the truth that Jesus is God’s Messiah. This is not, in my view, an attack on the Incarnation, per say. John didn’t repeat the phrase he uses when he is talking about people rejecting the Incarnation, which is: “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh”. He uses different terminology here because I think he is talking about a different type of attack, and it’s coming from a different group of people.

It’s clear (at least to me) because of how John phrases his thoughts in this passage, that he’s talking about people who acknowledge the Father, but who reject the Son. He said: “*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also”. This shows that the issue is not the Incarnation of God, but a specific rejection as Jesus Christ as God’s Son and Messiah. In my mind, there’s one group who fits that bill better than the rest of the religious groups of that day, and that would be the Jews. But whoever it was, the spirit of Antichrist was working in and through *them*, just as it was also working in and through the Gnostic Christians during that same time.

So far, you can see that the entity known as Antichrist, is first and foremost a demon spirit who seduces people regarding the person of Jesus Christ, which in turn, makes people *human* antichrists. There is no fundamental difference between being against Christ by denying His attributes or being against Christ by trying to counterfeit His attributes. In both cases, people are led away from Christ and become His enemies. Therefore, I don’t agree with Mr. Vine that “*pseudochristos*” (false Christ’s) are different than human “*antichristos*”. “*Pseudochristos*” are walking under the same spirit of Antichrist. It’s just that they are denying Christ in a different way than the “*antichristos*” of John’s day. They are denying Him by trying to *replace* Him.

Let’s go back and look again at the *way* Jesus said “many” Christians would be deceived in the last days. He said the cause of this deception would be great signs and wonders. He’s talking about supernatural *experiences*, not about wrong doctrine. Do you remember what I said the other week about how the man of sin gains access to the “temple” of God in II. Thessalonians 2? He gains access to the temple by *supernatural* means—power and signs and lying wonders, which come from Satan (*II. Thess. 2:9*). Do you think it’s a coincidence that Jesus and Paul both talked about *demonic* experience posing as *Christian* experience, being the downfall of “many” in the last days? I don’t! I think they were describing the same thing from different perspectives.

*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. 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*

*And there was given unto him a **mouth speaking great things** and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 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*

If all we had to go by were the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 and the words of Paul in II. Thessalonians 2, then maybe the view I am advancing could be challenged with other Scripture. But the fact is, the view I am putting forth is confirmed by many passages of Scripture. Two of them would be where John and Daniel were shown the same last world empire. Both these men of God were shown that in the last days an incredibly wicked entity would arise. Daniel saw this final manifestation of evil as a “little horn”. John saw it as a “beast”. Both men said this entity would be given power to do certain things that we would like to ignore. They said this entity will be given a mouth that speaks great things against God—meaning, it will blaspheme the name and the temple of God. Also, it will be given power to “make war” with the saints and *overcome* them.

Most Christians don’t have any desire to read or meditate on *this* portion of the Bible. They would much rather go through the Book and read all the positive things it says about them. They want to read and meditate on all the blessings. They want to read about how they will be raptured into heaven before they have to experience anything too horrible. But if you claim to be a lover of the truth, you will love **THIS** truth as well. I won’t make you happy, to be sure. But you should love *it* like you do all truth.

According to the Scripture—not just according to Dan Mace’s personal, pessimistic opinion—in the last days, Satan is going to make war on the saints and **MANY** of them are going to be overcome. That means, it’s very likely that people you know, maybe even those of your own family, will be overcome in these days. They will be overcome through *demonic spiritual experiences* they assume to be coming from God, but which are in fact coming from religious demon spirits who are imitating person and work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is the test the final generation of believers will face and very few of us are *prepared* to face it. Because of all the error we have been taught regarding redemption, and more specifically about demons, most of us have no idea how to protect ourselves against these kinds of spirits. We do not know how to tell the difference between true spiritual experience and counterfeit spiritual experience. Unless God intervenes in their lives in a mighty way, the man of sin will take his seat in many of US and we will become completely desolate.

This is why I’ve spent the last 15 years warning anyone who would listen to me about the reality and the danger of the **SPIRIT** of Antichrist. Most of those who claim to be Christians right now will succumb to this spirit in the coming months. The goal and the desire of *antichristos* today is to become your God. His goal is to take his seat in your life—which is God’s temple—and show you, through *experience* (by supernatural means) that he is your God. And he will accomplish his goal in the lives of many, many people before it’s all over.

That’s why I’ve said this on several occasions, and I’m going to say it again. For every *ten* Christians you know, you can be sure that at least *half* of them are involved with religious spirits. Counterfeit Christianity—that is, *demonic Christian experience*—is the deception the final generation must face and overcome. It doesn’t matter whether you believe me or not; you are all going to face these spirits wherever you turn, from here on out. You’ll never be able to get away from them again, until the Lord returns. They will be in your family; they will be in your

friendships; they will be in your work relationships; they will be in your church relationships. They will be coming at you from every direction, especially the vast majority of ministers you listen to. Even if you manage to cut yourself off from all living creatures on this planet, in order to avoid them, they will still be able to talk to you directly from the spirit realm. There is no escape. We only have *one* option if we want to be victorious in these days. Learn how to recognize these spirits in those around us, and learn how to recognize them when they try to speak to us directly. Either we learn how to fight them, or we will be overcome by them.

I realize this will sound overly dramatic, or maybe even bizarre to some of those who hear this, but it's the truth. Moreover, I can say with all confidence and boldness that one day, *everyone* is going to acknowledge that what I have been saying these past 15 years is absolutely true. Don't worry, I'll be long gone by the time they do. So I won't be getting any glory from it and it won't really matter to me at that point; but they *will* acknowledge the truth. They will all acknowledge it because Jesus said it; the apostle Paul said it; John said it; the prophet Daniel said it; and there are people like me all over this planet who are saying it.

Counterfeit *Christian* experience, that is, *demonic* Christian experience, is THE deception of the last days and every child of God is going to be tested or tempted by it because it's part of God's plan. The only question is, will *you* overcome it, or will it overcome you?