



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST *MESSENGER*



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....6:30 p.m.

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BIBLE “BAD GUYS”: THE ANTICHRIST

Brian R. Kenyon

While studying the Book of Revelation, it is very noticeable that commentators will use the terms “man of sin,” “the Antichrist,” and “the beast” as if they were all interchangeable, referring to the same “bad guy.” However, even in recent history, just because some antagonists have the same characteristics (such as arrogance, deception, etc.) does not mean they are the same entity (Mt. 7:15-20)! In this article, we will examine what the Bible teaches about “The Antichrist,” one of the major “bad guys” some confuse by putting that entity into the Book of Revelation.

The actual capitalized term (as if it were a single archenemy), “the Antichrist,” occurs only in the New King James Version (among the major translations I use). The definite article “the” only occurs in one of the five times the Greek word *antichristos* (ἀντίχριστος) is found (1 Jn. 4:3). The reason it has a definite article is not because it is describing the ultimate “bad guy” but the spirit, or attitude/conviction, of an antichrist. The verse reveals “every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist [antichrist, KJV]” (1 Jn. 4:3). Note how the other translations read: “every spirit ... this is the spirit of the Antichrist” (NKJ cf. the antichrist, NAS95, ESV); “every spirit ... this is that spirit of antichrist” (KJV); and for those familiar with the original language, “πάν πνεῦμα ... τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου” (UBS5). “Spirit” in “this is the spirit of the Antichrist” is added by the translators as indicated by italics in printed Bibles. There are actually two definite articles next to each other, *to* (τὸ), which is singular accusative neuter (as predicate nominative), and *tou* (τοῦ), which is singular genitive masculine, showing possession. The same “spirit” (attitude/conviction) possessed by antichrists is possessed by all those who deny Jesus came in the flesh!

The typical definition lexicons give for “antichrist” (ἀντίχριστος) is something like “one who claims to be Christ or is opposed to Christ.” The “opposed to Christ” part is correct, at least indirectly. However, the Bible nowhere says of an “antichrist” that he claims to be God. The “man of sin” claimed that (2 Thes. 2:4; see last week’s bulletin), but not “antichrist.” This also illustrates the point above that these “bad guy” terms are loosely used interchangeably as if they were referring to the same person! To get the biblical picture of “antichrist,” let us examine what the verses actually teach.

FIRST JOHN 2:18-19, “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist [antichrist (without ‘the’), KJV; ESV] is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made

manifest, that none of them were of us.” Let us note some truths according to this passage. First, there was no “the Antichrist” (despite the NKJ rendering), but “many antichrists” had already come in John’s time. Second, antichrists’ coming confirmed it was “the last hour” (1 Jn. 2:18). Exactly what “last hour” meant is open for discussion, but we know it did not mean the time right before Jesus was to return, for this world still stands (cf. Mt. 24:36; 1 Thes. 5:1-3). Third, John’s readers could “know” when antichrists came (1 Jn. 2:18). They were not mysterious, invisible beings that no one could discern. Fourth, antichrists “went out from us, but they were not of us ... none of them were of us” (1 Jn. 1:19). This meant they either were actual “fair-weather” followers of the apostles (cf. Jn 6:66) or, most likely, they just claimed to have followed the apostles, but either way, they were not committed to the “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42 cf. Mt. 7:22-23; Acts 15:24). This should have been obvious to those who knew the truth (“manifest,” cf. Jn. 3:18-21).

FIRST JOHN 2:22, “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.” This verse reveals first that an antichrist is a “liar.” John used this word more than any other New Testament writer (Jn. 8:44, 55; 1 Jn. 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10). One of the ways it is used, as here, is when someone refuses to accept obvious truth and purports something else about the same subject. This makes him a liar (cf. 1 Jn. 5:10). When the evidence for Jesus’ deity and humanity is objectively evaluated, the *only* rational conclusion is that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16 cf. Jn. 3:1-2; 6:69; Acts 2:22; 10:38). Second, an antichrist “denies that Jesus is the Christ.” If Jesus were not who He claimed (cf. Jn. 5:18-47), He could not be the Messiah. Thus, to deny Jesus is both God and man is to deny He was the Christ! Third, an “antichrist” denies “the Father and the Son.” Jesus said, “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also ... He who has seen Me has seen the Father ... The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority” (Jn. 14:7-10). It is impossible to believe the Father while rejecting the Son (cf. Jn. 7:16; 10:33-38)!

FIRST JOHN 4:3, “and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist [the antichrist, NAS95, ESV], which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” From this verse we first learn an antichrist “does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” The term “confess” carries with it the idea of acknowledging something that a person believes (cf. Rom 10:9-10). Thus, this is saying that an antichrist does not believe Jesus came “in the flesh,” which denies the full humanity of Jesus. Although full-blown Gnosticism occurred around AD 200, the seeds of it were addressed in the first century (cf. Col. 2:20-23; 1 Jn. 1:1-3). Since the philosophy considered all material things, including flesh, evil and only spiritual things good, they had a big problem with Jesus. How could a good spiritual God exist in supposedly evil flesh? One way they got around their (self-imposed false) dilemma was to claim Jesus was not actually in a fleshly body. This philosophy spilt over into the church of John’s time as it has in ours. For example, those who deny that Jesus bled when scourged (Jn. 19:1) or when Roman soldiers drove nails through His hands and feet (cf. Jn. 20:25) deny that Jesus had the same flesh as any other human being (but cf. Heb. 2:14). Second, the “spirit,” or attitude/conviction, of antichrist was “now already in the world” when John wrote. Thus, the antichrists about whom John wrote were not some end of the world “bad guys” that were going to be a sign of the end times.

SECOND JOHN 7, “For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” John again repeated the themes that antichrists do not believe Jesus was fully human and that many had already been present. John added these antichrists were “deceivers,” which can include the idea of being an imposter (cf. 2 Cor. 6:8; 1 Tim. 4:1). As evidenced even today, when people deny the full humanity of Jesus (like saying He never bled on the cross until the soldier pierced Him), they have to invent deceptive twists of Scripture to support their error (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16).

CONCLUSION

Let us not allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking “the Antichrist” is the fictional archenemy denominationalism claims. Rather, let us examine ourselves to see that we are not antichrists by denying Jesus’ humanity (or His deity). Jesus said, “If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (Jn. 8:25). We cannot truly believe in Christ if we do not truly believe He was fully human and fully divine!

PRAYER LIST

Current: Jim Turner has returned home from the hospital. Wadi Khoury and Kathy Nester both have RSV. Kathy Sweeney (flu), Fran Gabaldon (spot on lung), bettye bolding (fall)

Continual: Stacey Paulin (Trigeminal Neuralgia Pain), Debbie Bush (struggles); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Linda Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health); Ronnie Lynn is recovering from neck surgery.

Shut-ins: Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

Joyce Burbage, a long time member at SFA passed away last Friday. Joyce taught Sunday School and she and her husband were active members here for many years. The funeral will be Friday at 2:00 pm at Lakeland Memorial Gardens, the viewing begins a 1:00 pm. Please remember her family in your prayers at this time.



THE SEBRING PARKWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST
invites you to attend a

GOSPEL MEETING



with
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Cookeville,
Tennessee

"QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED"

Sunday Morning Bible Study - 9:00 a.m.
"Is Technology Killing God's People?"
Sunday Morning Worship Assembly - 10:00 a.m.
"What is Your Life but a Vapor?"
Sunday Morning Third Hour - 11:15 a.m.
"Is Your Heart Right with God?"
Monday Evening Worship Assembly - 7:00 p.m.
"What is True Repentance?"
Tuesday Evening Worship Assembly - 7:00 p.m.
"What will the Day of Judgment be Like?"
Wednesday Evening Worship Assembly - 7:00 p.m.
"Do I Need to be Rebaptized?"
(LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 1:00 P.M. ON SUNDAY.)

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For more information,
please call (863) 385-7443,
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sebringparkway@sebringcoc.com.

FEBRUARY 18-21, 2024

The Elders would like to meet with each SFA family to hear your ideas, concerns and questions.

They will be at the building on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Please call the office of set up a time and day that works best for your family.

"Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."
Hebrews 13:17

Scheduled to Serve in January

Designated Elder	Bobby Sheumaker
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Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Announcements	David Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Terrance Dindy
Devotional / Invitation	David Williams
Closing Prayer	Camron Bailey

Sunday, February 4, 2024

10:30 am Sermon	Roberson Louissaint
"Trials Do Not Last Forever" (James 1:1-4)	
6:00 pm Sermon	Rick Kenyon
"Lord Teach Us To Pray" (Luke 11:1-4)	

Those to Serve 10:30 am

Greeters	Sweeney/P. Spears
Song/Pray before class	Frank Hamby
Announcements (both)	Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader (both)	David Williams
Prayer / Bible reading	Paul Sweeney
Lord's Table (both)	Nigel St Bernard
Closing Prayer	Joseph Faulk
Open/Close Building	David Anderson
Attendance Cards	Peyton/Landon
Sound Booth (both)	Jason Hendrix

Those to Serve 6:00 pm

Greeters	Mccarters
Announcements	Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader	David Williams
Prayer / Bible reading	Mike Van Allen
Closing Prayer	Phil Fife

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Announcements	Rick Kenyon
Song Leader / Prayer	Landon Willcut
Devotional / Invitation	Bobby Sheumaker
Closing Prayer	David Deal

How We Are Giving

January 14	\$9,302.00
January 21	\$6,594.00
January 28	\$5,947.63
Contribution Average	\$7,378.33
Weekly Budget	\$7,410.00

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!

WWCC Spring Ladies Retreat

Feb. 15-17, 2024

"Spill the Tea"

Register by February 4, 2024

Please join us for an uplifting weekend in the Word and in fellowship with our Christian sisters!



No Time

I knelt to pray but not for long;
I had too much to do.
I had to hurry and get to work,
For bills would soon be due.

So I knelt and said a hurried prayer,
And jumped up off my knees.
My Christian duty was now done,
My soul could rest at ease.

All day long I had no time
To spread a word of cheer;
No time to speak of Christ to friends;
They'd laugh at me I feared.

No time, no time, too much to do.
That was my constant cry;
No time to give to souls in need,
but at last the time to die.

And when before the Lord I came,
I stood with downcast eyes.
For in His hands God held a book;
It was the book of Life.

God looked into His book and said,
"Your name I cannot find.
I once was going to write it down,
But never found to time."

At What Point Was Saul Saved?

When Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road, Saul of Tarsus asked the two most important questions anyone can ask, "Who are You, Lord?" and "What do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:5-6). To answer the first, Jesus identified Himself. To answer the second, Jesus told Saul, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6). Saul did that and found Ananias who taught him the gospel (Acts 9:10-18). As Paul, formerly known as Saul, recounted his conversion to the Jews, he acknowledged Ananias' question, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul was not saved (had his sins "washed away") until he was baptized into Christ! Thus, baptism is the point at which he and all other people are saved (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38, 40-41, 47).

YESWeekend
Youth Enrichment Seminar



February 23-25, 2024

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CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Return Service Requested

**"It is honorable for a man to stop
striving, Since any fool can start a
quarrel"**

Proverbs 20:3



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.