

1 John - The Antichrist

John's first reference to Antichrist is in **1 Jn 2v18**. We will see that this became more than just a false teaching. It became an entire world wide system of religion which was hostile to the Truth. The following verses introduce us to this subject:

1 Jn 2v15-17: "Love not **the world**, neither the things in **the world**. If any man love **the world**, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in **the world**, the **lust of the flesh**, **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of **the world**. And **the world** passeth away, and the lust thereof, **but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.**"

The story therefore begins in Genesis: This should not surprise us because there are many allusions to **Gen 1-4** in **1 John**. In **Gen 3v6** Eve was deceived by the serpent and gave in to the 3 lusts of **1 Jn 2v16**. In **Gen 3v15** there is a promise of a Saviour, Jesus Christ, who would completely overcome the same 3 lusts:

"And I will put **enmity** (*hatred*) between thee (*the serpent*) and the woman, and between thy (*the serpent's*) seed and her (*the woman's*) seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

There are two opposing forces in this great struggle:

1. The Seed of the serpent: Those ruled by the natural impulses of human nature, and

2. The Seed of the woman: those transformed by God's Word. The black and white nature of this conflict is seen in **1 John 1**.

The seed of the woman was ultimately fulfilled in Christ - and by extension is a term which applies to all those who are "**in Christ**" by faith and baptism. These have **faith in God's Word**: **Psa 119v 97-105**; **Lk 4v4,8,10**; **Gal 3v6-9,26**; **Heb 11v1-6,13**; **1 Jn 5v4**. This is why **1 Jn 1v1** introduces Jesus Christ as the "Word of life".

The seed of the serpent was fulfilled through the ages in faithless individuals who **challenge God's Word**: **Gen 3v1**. They also **deny its truth**: **Gen 3v4**; **Lk 3v7**; **Jn 7v7**; **Rom 8v7**. There are constant warnings of this all through **1 John**.

The Great Controversy of the Ages: Throughout history, the seed of the serpent has been the overwhelming majority. For the seed of the woman it has been a struggle for survival.

Cain and Abel: In **Gen 4v6-8** Cain murders his brother Abel. This was a **type** of what was to unfold through history between these 2 powers. Abel understood the principle of forgiveness - that **a covering** was required, and that a **Lamb** would be provided. This is Christ, the woman's seed, who would crush the serpent's head. When Cain murdered Abel he demonstrated this **enmity** between the 2 seeds. An important reference to this is in **1 Jn 3v12-13**.

The Kingdom of Men: Serpent antagonism has also been represented by many **systems** of rule through the ages. These are described in **Daniel** as the **Kingdom of Men** (**4v17,25,32**; **5v21**). In **Genesis 10v8-10**; **11v1-6** the seed of the serpent is organised into a political system based on the thinking of the flesh.

Abraham however was **called out from Babylon**: **Gen 12v1**; **Heb 11v8-16**. Here we see 2 cities. One is of men, the other is of God. Jesus himself said that "salvation is of the Jews": **Jn 4v22**. Our hope is **the hope of Israel**: **Acts 28v20**. Consequently, Jews became the target for mankind's opposition to God's will.

In **Daniel 2** the seed of the serpent is organised into a **political**

and **religious** system which is at **enmity** with the seed of the woman. Nebuchadnezzar's image is a **man** because it represents the Kingdom of Men and the thinking of the flesh. God says He will replace this Kingdom by an everlasting Kingdom ruled over by the Seed of the Woman: **Dan 2v44**; **1 Jn 2v17**; **Rev 11v15**.

The life of Christ: In Christ's day, the Jewish leaders were condemned as a "generation of vipers" who sought "by craft" (deceit) to put him to death: **Mk 14v1**; **Lk 3v7**; **19v47**. See **1 Jn 2v4,9-11**.

The whole essence of this controversy was seen in the life of Christ. He was the Word made flesh: **Jn 1v14**; **1 Jn 1v1**; **Rev 19v13**. He overcame **the serpent** within, even to death on the cross. He crushed the head of **the serpent** by defeating sin. He showed that true greatness is found in giving one's life for others: **Phil 2v4**. Christ's death was so extreme because it was **the ultimate clash** between the Seed of the Serpent and Seed of the Woman.

This war continued against Christ's brethren in the first Century: **1 Pet 5v8-9**. Ironically, over time, the ecclesia actually merged with the seed of the serpent: **2 Thess 2v1-11**. Paul warned of a falling away from the Truth, characterised by serpent-like deceit, which then made war with the true believers: **Rev 12v15-17**; **13v7**.

Antichrist developed into this very system! The Trinity became a central teaching of the RC Church. So what does John say about it?

1 Jn 2v18 antichrist shall come, even now are there many **antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us...

1 Jn 2v22 Who is **(the)** liar but he that **denieth that Jesus is the Christ?** He is **(the) antichrist**, that **denieth the Father and the Son**. (Greek: The Antichrist)

1 Jn 4v1-2 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.

2 Jn v7 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**.

This spirit of Antichrist is therefore a teaching that **Jesus did not come in the flesh** (Greek *sarx*). What does John mean?

Rom 8v3 God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful **flesh** (*sarx*) and for sin, condemned sin in the **flesh** (*sarx*):

1 Pet 4v1 ...as Christ hath suffered for us in the **flesh** (*sarx*), arm yourselves likewise with the same mind...

Heb 5v7 Who in the days of his **flesh** (*sarx*), when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears...

The same word **flesh** in **2 Pet 2v10,18**; **1 Jn 2v16** is clearly speaking of mortal human nature. Jesus was tempted as we are yet without sin: **Heb 2v14-18**; **4v15**. He was a descendent of Abraham and David: **Gal 3v16**; **Acts 13v23**. He was *made a little lower than the angels*: **Heb 2v7-9**. It is fundamental to God's whole plan of salvation that Jesus came in our nature to defeat sin on our behalf. Jesus was exalted to immortality because of his perfect obedience: **Phil 2v5-10**. God was his Father, yet he has sympathy for our weaknesses.

Continually we read of the **Father** (17x) and **Son** (25x) in **1,2,3 John**.

Why? Because this is central to God's salvation plan. Also, this reveals to us the father-like character of God. A true belief in the wonder of Jesus Christ as God's Son develops in us a special and right relationship with God and Christ. Also, we have a true appreciation of God's plan of salvation with us personally.

A falling away from the Truth was foretold by the apostles in **Acts 20v29-31**; **1 Cor 15v12**; **2 Cor 11v2-4**; **Gal 1v8-9**, **2 Thess 2v1-11**; **1 Tim 4v1-5**; **2 Tim 2v18**; **2 Pet 2v1-3**; **Rev 2v18-22**. Another defining characteristic of this false Christianity was that they did not practise the commandments of Christ. All through **1,2,3 John** we read of those who **claim** to know God but who **do not keep his commands**. For example, in **Rev 11v7**; **12v17**; **13v7-10** we read that they waged war on their enemies.

Vine's expository dictionary says, "Antichristos can mean either against Christ or instead of Christ or perhaps, combining the two, one who, assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ." This **exactly defines the Papacy**, who set up the Pope as "God on earth" as foretold in **2 Thess 2v1-11** and **Rev 13v11-18**. In the Pope we see an embodiment of this whole Antichrist system.

Popular Modern Christian Teaching: Many Christians today are being taught that an astounding Jewish leader will suddenly appear on the world scene. They teach that he comes to public attention with a dazzling victory over the enemies of Israel. He does so by supernatural powers using weapons of nature to gain his victory. After he destroys Israel's enemies he proceeds to convince Israel that he is their Messiah. We are told that this "antichrist" builds a temple in Jerusalem, insisting that it is the capital of the world and that all nations come to worship. If nations resist, he will vigorously suppress them. They *think* that he is "the devil" in disguise. This teaching began within the RCC in the 1600's. It spread in the 1800's and in the last 40 years it has been accepted by mainstream Protestant churches.

The Truth: This is not Antichrist! This is **Jesus Christ!** This is not "the devil in disguise"! **Psalms 2** tells of the nations fighting against Christ when he returns. **Why?** Because they **imagine** something that it not true! They have been deceived:

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people **imagine a vain thing**? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and **against his anointed**... He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath...**Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion**... Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (**Psa 2v1-9**, quoted in **Rev 2v27**; **19v15** in the context of God's judgments)

This is the end result of the Antichrist teaching John warned of. It is one of the most amazing deceptions in world history, of which here is presented just a fraction of the story. What a blessing it is to understand the Truth! The most wonderful thing is that **the saints will be with Christ** at this time: **Rev 17v14**...

European nations "make war against the Lamb. But the Lamb will overcome them because he is the most powerful Lord of all and the greatest King of all. His appointed, chosen and faithful followers will be with him." **NIV**