

Who Is the Antichrist? #2
Daniel 11:36; 1 John 2:18-22
July 28, 2022
Greg L. Price

One significant objection that is raised when it is affirmed the Papacy is “the Antichrist” that was prophesied to come by the Apostle John (1 John 2:18) is that John declares in 1 John 2:22 “the Antichrist” will deny that Jesus is the Christ. And since no Pope in history has ever denied that Jesus is the Christ or has denied that Jesus has come in the flesh (1 John 4:3), it is claimed that the Papacy cannot be “the Antichrist” prophesied to come.

This seems like an ironclad objection. But in what sense does “the Antichrist” deny that Jesus is the Christ? Now, that is the question that we must seek to answer today. We considered last Lord’s Day the first question in this two-part sermon from 1 John 2:18-22: (1) What Does “Antichrist” Mean? Let us today turn our attention to the second question: (2) How Does Antichrist Deny Christ?

II. How Does Antichrist Deny Christ?

A. Review

1. We are seeking to provide New Testament confirmation as to who “the king” is in Daniel 11:36. Many (perhaps most interpreters) identify “the king” with “the man of sin” and “son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4) and with “the antichrist” (1 John 2:18-22).

2. John prophesied that “the Antichrist” was coming. John distinguishes this one Antichrist that was yet to come from “many antichrists” that were already promoting their heresies at the time of John (1 John 2:18). This one Antichrist has the singular definite article, “the” (in the Greek text), and is distinguished from all the other “many antichrists” (in the plural) that already existed in John’s day. He is not just one among many antichrists, but he is “the Antichrist” (1 John 2:22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7).

3. We also noted that “the Antichrist” is not one who directly professes to be hostile to Christ or professes to be the enemy of Christ. *Antichristos* (Antichrist) means one who presents himself in the place of Christ and who claims to represent Christ. Antichrist’s opposition to Christ is expressed by usurping the place of Christ as Christ’s Substitute upon earth. Just as *Antichristos* (Antichrist) in Greek means “in the place of Christ”, so the official title of the Papacy, *Vicarius Christi* (Vicar of Christ) in Latin, means “one who stands in the place of Christ” or the Substitute of Christ. Thus, *Antichristos* (in Greek) and *Vicarius Christi* (in Latin) mean essentially the same thing.

4. Lastly, just as the “many antichrists” fell away from the faithful Church of Christ by apostasy (1 John 2:19), so likewise does “the Antichrist” (as we saw in 2 Thessalonians 2:3). Thus, “the Antichrist” is not merely a political leader, but is both a political/religious leader that claims to be a Christian in ruling over the Church.

B. There is a sense in which “the Antichrist” confesses Christ, and there is a sense in which he denies Christ.

1. How does the Antichrist confess Christ?

a. He does so by taking upon himself the mantle of Christ (as the Vicar of Christ), claiming to be the representative of Christ, and outwardly professing Jesus as the Christ.

b. That is the reason for the great deception that leads so many to follow him (over one billion in the Church of Rome). He comes with “all deceivableness (deception)” and with “signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).

c. It is possible to outwardly profess Christ, and yet by word and deed to deny Him (Titus 1:16; 1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Timothy 3:5). Even the “many antichrists” (false teachers) in John’s day professed Jesus Christ. However, it was not only what they professed, but what they meant by what they professed and

how they practiced their faith that revealed them to be antichrists, professing Christ, yet denying Him.

2. **How does the Antichrist deny Christ?**

a. Look at 1 John 2:22. “The Antichrist”, whom John prophesies is to come, is “the liar”, i.e. he speaks contrary to the true doctrine and worship of Jesus Christ. How is this true of the Papacy?

b. The Papacy denies Jesus is the Christ sent by the Father indirectly and by consequence (even if he claims to be the representative of Christ) by introducing heresies that undermine Christ (1 John 4:1-3).

c. The heresy of Christ’s omnipresent human body (Jesus as to His divine nature is omnipresent, but as to His human nature/body He is not omnipresent).

(1) When the antichrists (false teachers) taught that Jesus was not born with an actual body of flesh, was not crucified, and was not raised from the dead in an actual body of flesh, these false teachers who professed Christ actually denied that the Jesus revealed in Holy Scripture is the Christ (fully God and fully Man). They did not believe in the Christ sent by the Father and revealed in Scripture. These “antichrists” did not *directly* deny Jesus to be Christ, but *indirectly* by consequence of their heresy they denied Jesus Christ. To deny the truth concerning the Son is to deny the Father who sent Him.

(2) The Papal Antichrist denies Christ is fully and truly man by making His body omnipresent in every location throughout the world where the Mass is observed (contra Luke 24:39; Hebrews 2:14).

If any one denieth, that, in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist, are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ; but saith that he is only therein as in a sign, or in figure, or virtue, let him be anathema (Council of Trent, Session 13, Canon 1).

(3) The divine nature and human nature of Christ are not mixed or confounded into a hybrid by virtue of the hypostatic union (one divine person, yet two distinct natures). Any such mixture of natures in Christ was condemned as heresy by the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451): Jesus is “acknowledged in two natures [namely, divine and human—GLP] without confusion [mixture—GLP], without change [Christ’s body was essentially the same before and after His resurrection—GLP], without division, without separation.” An omnipresent body is both a confusion and a change.

d. The heresy of assuming Christ’s office as the only Head of His Visible Church on earth (contra Colossians 1:18—“And he is the head of the body, the church”). That is heresy. It is denying Christ in His offices.

Question: Why is the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, the visible Head of the Church?

Answer: The Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the visible Head of the Church because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ made the chief of the Apostles and the visible Head of the Church (*The Baltimore Catechism*, Question 118).

e. Likewise, it is affirmed by the Papacy that Mary, the Blessed Virgin is along with Jesus co-Advocate and co-Mediatrix (contra 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1). This is denying Christ in His offices.

Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. . . . Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 969).

f. The Papal Antichrist denies the finished work of Christ as Redeemer by teaching that He is re-sacrificed each time the host in the mass is consecrated by the priest (contra Hebrews 9:24-28).

If any one saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities: let him be anathema (Council of Trent, Session 22, Canon 3).

D. Thus, the objection that the Papacy cannot be “the Antichrist” because he does not deny Jesus is the Christ is simply not true. The Papacy does indirectly by consequence deny Jesus is the Christ by the introduction of many blasphemous doctrines that deny Christ His full humanity, that rob Christ of His offices as sole Mediator between God and Man (adding a Mediatrix never mentioned in Scripture), that usurp Jesus as sole Head of the Church Militant upon earth, and that blasphemously fabricate an on-going sacrifice of Christ upon an altar under the authority of the Papacy.

1. If the false prophets in the early Church, who professed to be the representatives of Christ, denied Him by means of their heresies (which undermined the true doctrines of Christ), then the Papal Antichrist who claims to be the Vicar of Christ upon earth also denies Christ by means of his heresies (which undermine the true doctrines of Christ).

2. And for this very reason, I submit that the Antichrist cannot be Nero, cannot be an Islamic Mahdi, or cannot be a future global political leader, for none of these arose from within the Church of Christ and claimed to be the Vicar or Substitute Christ (enthroned in the place of Christ) as head of the Visible Church upon earth. Only the Papacy fulfils the meaning, the origin, and the characteristics that the Apostle John prophesies concerning the Antichrist (and that Paul describes in 2 Thessalonians 2).

E. Application

1. It is not only by introducing and teaching heresies concerning Christ that one indirectly denies Christ, but it is also by contradicting in one’s conduct and affections what one professes about Christ that denies Him. For example, when the Papacy declares that abortion is murder, but allows U.S. politicians who support a woman’s “right” to murder her child to participate in a Papal Mass in the Vatican (or anywhere else), we can see how blatant is the denial of the Sixth Commandment by such a contradictory practice.

2. Are we as quick to see how we may indirectly deny the truth and Christ revealed in Scripture by our contradictory life and unrepentant behavior? And more importantly, do we care?

a. Are we indirectly denying the holiness of Christ by angry words of cursing, using God’s name in vain, allowing our mouths to become sewers of filth in communication to others, or our eyes and ears to be filled with all manner of immorality from the television or internet?

b. Are we indirectly denying the faith of Christ by treating those within our own household with less love and respect than we would even strangers?

c. Are we indirectly denying the sovereignty of God by our incessant worry and fears about our circumstances in life or our discontentment with what God has graciously given us?

d. Are we indirectly denying the love of Christ by giving our deepest affection to the things that are vanishing all around us rather than to Christ, who is to be our first love?

3. Let us not be deceived into thinking that it is only by verbally denying Christ that we deny may Christ in our lives.

4. But let us never, ever forget that Christ died to redeem us (who trust in Him) from all the ways that we may deny Him. Peter also denied Christ, but Christ prayed for him (not the angels or the saints in heaven) as we see in Luke 22:31-32. Praise God for the intercession of Jesus Christ our only Advocate at God’s right hand, who pleads His own righteousness before the Father (Romans 8:33-34).

Copyright 2024 Greg L. Price.