

#4 – Counterfeit Christ – Anti-Christ Part 1

Introduction/Purpose: To identify Biblical anti-Christ characteristics. To explore principles needed to unmask the motives behind the masterpiece counterfeit of Jesus Christ.

1. Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7 What unique characteristic distinguishes the serpent? (v.1) How much truth did the serpent use in his words with Eve?

Every word was true except one word involving one lie: “Ye shall not surely die.” The package the devil uses to be most effective in successfully sharing lies is an alluringly attractive appearance of lofty love and liberty seductively spoken in a language of friendly flattery. The fruit Eve ate was truly “good for food”. No physical harm came to the serpent, or to her from eating it. What was the only way that Eve might have discerned the deadly danger and saved herself? Did Eve choose to trust her senses, her feelings; her self instead of the Word of God? *...the devil...was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. Joh 8:44* The original meaning of the word translated as subtil (cunning; crafty), describes great intelligence mingled with self-serving motives. It is similar to ‘wily’ or ‘sly’. Are lies; counterfeits most potent alone, or surrounded by as much truth as possible? The devil clothes himself in innocence and truth, and ceaselessly adds to his bottomless wardrobe of temptations. He often duplicates a costume, and then makes slight alterations so that his attacks; counterfeits of the Word, are increasingly more Life-like; bearing a closer and more detailed resemblance to Christ; thus being more and more difficult to discern. Should it come as a surprise that the devil’s allies outwardly wear a flattering Christian costume? *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. 2Cor 11:14-15*

2. Matthew 4:3-7 To change his attack in Jesus’ 2nd temptation, the devil quoted from the Holy Scriptures to disguise his lies among truth.

3. Psalm 91:9-12 The devil left out the safeguards against presumption in verse 9 to tempt Jesus to prove Himself. If Jesus, to assert Himself, had presumed upon Divine power, this would have canceled the Heavenly covenant of Child’s blood that we may now have written in our heart and be saved.

4. Psalm 43:3 Where does the truth lead us to? What is the equivalent of the tabernacle today? (church) Since satan’s habit is to hide his deceptions masterfully camouflaged within the truth, where will we most likely find his greatest dominion in the world today? The place where the devil is working most diligently and successfully in the world today is in every organization professing Christianity; within all denominational churches.

5. Matthew 24:3-4, 24-25 Who was in danger of being deceived? (v.4) Who will be in danger today? (v.24)

Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves... Mat 10:16, Luk 10:3 We are to be extremely wary of the messages and messengers all around us in *sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Mat 7:15, Act 20:29* Pride must be sacrificed as antagonistic. Self-exaltation must be genuinely abhorred and abandoned. God’s Spirit alone inspires the truth to be proclaimed without either pride or condemnation. Holy inspiration does not look down on the ignorant, or up to the lofty. It does not strive to magnify thorns, or excuse sin. It does not seek to enforce worship, or to scatter the flock.

6. 2Thessalonians 2:1-3 Who is Paul talking to? Therefore, what is going to be fallen away from? Had this son of perdition been revealed at the time Paul wrote this? (no)

‘Falling away’ in the original Greek means apostasy, or divorce. In order to fall away, apostatize, or divorce, there must have been something or someone to fall away, apostatize, or divorce from. This is an apostate Christian power. Perdition means ruin, loss, destruction, or damnation. The term ‘son of perdition’ appears in Scripture only two times. This was one; now let’s look at the other one.

7. John 17:12 What Scripture was fulfilled? – Let’s investigate: *When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.... He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. And after the sop Satan entered into him.... Joh 13:21, 26-27*

8. Psalms 41:9 Was this prophetic Scripture fulfilled exactly as Jesus said it would be?

9. Luke 22:47-48 How did Judas betray Jesus?, **Matthew 27:1-5** Since the son of perdition that Paul is speaking of in 2Thes had not been revealed yet, then Paul is trying to tell us that Judas is symbolic of a future son of perdition which had not yet been revealed in Paul’s time. This prophesied future son of perdition was not to appear to be in direct opposition to Christ. He was predicted to appear Christian; feigning alliance and love, but betraying “with a kiss”.

10. 2Thessalonians 2:3-4 What is the plan of this “man of sin”; anti-Christ; son of perdition; one “who opposeth”?

The original Greek meaning of the word anti, according to the Strong’s concordance, may mean opposition, and it also may mean in the place of; instead of; substitution. As prophecy foretold, through human agency, satan’s cunning plan was to infiltrate the church, from the top down, and to counterfeit worship. Notice what Jesus said to ‘the church’; the self-confident, proud ‘chosen people’ of His day: *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.... Joh 8:44* Jesus’ message for the proud ‘chosen people’ of the past is the exact same message for the proud ‘chosen people’ of today; of the ‘end times’.

11. 2Thessalonians 2:5-7 Was there something holding back this son of perdition from being revealed?

In verse 7, the KJV uses the word ‘letteth’; the original Greek word means ‘suspend’. God suspended the revealing of this anti-Christ by suspending the collapse of the Roman Empire until 476 AD. “...While the Caesars held imperial power, it was impossible for the predicted antichrist to arise...On the fall of the Caesars he would arise.” {H. Grattan Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, p. 105 (1887)}

12. 2Thessalonians 2:8-10 When and how will this anti-Christ be destroyed? (v.8) What does this anti-Christ have in his arsenal to lead people away from the truth? (v.9)

What do we need in order to avoid being lost through deception? (v.10) (This anti-Christ is manifested from the falling away, right up to Jesus’ 2nd coming.)

When one is deceived, they are unaware that they are being deceived. Realizing the truth is virtually always extremely unpleasant and intensely humbling. What is the first step to becoming undeceived? The prerequisite to unlearning lies is heart vulnerability; embracing humility, rather than resisting against it. Unlocking deception’s power is a purifying process of surrender to truth. It is a process of surrendering to Christ and giving the heart to God to be sanctified. How do we receive the love of the truth? Jesus said: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock....I am the way, the truth, and the life... Rev 3:20, Joh 14:6* Jesus wants us to welcome Him; His Spirit; the Spirit of Truth - to abide in us. If we receive Him and surrender to Him, He will deliver us; He will save us; He will sanctify us. Representing the Father, Jesus is the only intercessory Way of reconciliation between us and the Father. *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father; and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father; and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father; and the Father in me... Joh 14:-11*

13. Matthew 3:16, Where did Jesus come up out of?, **Revelation 13:1-5** Where did this beast come up out of? (v.1) What does “all the world” do to this beast? (v.3-4;

wondered and worshiped) How does he get people to worship him? (‘blasphemy’ - definition in #17.) According to what we learned in 2Thes 2:9, what is in his arsenal to lead people away from the truth? (power, signs, lying wonders) Concerning the time period that this beast is given power, (v.5) how long is 42 months in years? (3.5 years) Does this beast appear to die, only to be resurrected? (v.3) After resurrecting, is the effect of this beast’s influence worldwide? (v.3)

14. Revelation 14:14 What is Jesus wearing? **Revelation 13:1, 12:3** What is this beast wearing? Who does this beast represent? (his father; the dragon; satan - Rev 12:9) Jesus came up out of the water when He was baptized. Jesus was given miraculous power from His Father for the 3.5 years of His worldly ministry. Jesus died, yet resurrected. Jesus has now received worldwide wonder and worship. Jesus works miracles, wears a crown, and represents His Father. A crafty cunning counterfeit of Jesus, this anti-Christ beast comes up out of the water. He is given miraculous power from his father the devil for 3.5 prophetic years. He appears to die, yet resurrects. He then receives worldwide wonder and worship. He works miracles, wears crowns, and represents his father. The difference between Jesus the Son of God and the beast son of satan; son of perdition is that Jesus uses truth alone and is the Truth. The counterfeit son uses lies and is a liar; inspired by his father the devil. Jesus is the genuine Son of God the Father, while this anti-Christ beast is the son of the father of lies. The devil is a counterfeit father; whose counterfeit ‘son’ is an impostor. This counterfeit anti-Christ Son appears marvelously and innocently as Christ. His is a counterfeit Christian worship. By flattery he calls for worship that makes room for self-pity and self-exaltation. He sits in a temple, supposedly God’s, professing himself to be God. He presents and exalts himself as high as, and even higher than the authority of Jesus. In what other ways does the devil impersonate Christ through counterfeit Christian denominational worship? - Let’s find out.

15. Matthew 12:38-41, What was Jonah’s occupation?, **Matthew 12:42** What was Solomon’s occupation?

A prophet is a messenger; a spokesperson for God. Jesus is greater than every prophet. Jesus is the voice of God. Jesus is greater than every king. Jesus is the authority of God. Jesus shares His Father’s authority; His throne. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. Rev 3:21*

16. Matthew 12:5-6 What were the priest’s occupations?

Priests of the sanctuary represented Jesus; interceding between God and man. Jesus is the only Person who can forgive sins. Greater than every priest, Jesus is the Divine Intercessor of God. The Magi who presented the gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus magnified Daniel’s promise of the coming King (Dan 9:24), David’s promise of the coming Priest (Psa 110:1-4), and Moses’ promise of the coming Prophet (Deu 18:15-19). When they saw Him, they fell down and worshiped Him (Mat 2:11), presenting Him with three gifts, each profound in their symbolism. The gold was symbolic of Jesus as King. (Dan 2:37-38) The frankincense (used by priests for incense) was symbolic of Jesus as Priest. (Lev 2:2) The myrrh (used by prophets to anoint) was symbolic of Jesus as Prophet. (Exo 30:22-25) Jesus Christ the Son of God is the Divine Prophet; King; and Priest. Jesus is the voice, authority, and intercessor of His Father. This anti-Christ counterfeits all three.

17. Revelation 13:2-6 Whose throne does the beast share? (v.2) Is this beast given the authority of his father? (v.2) Is this beast's voice the identical voice of his father, the dragon, satan? (v.5)

In the Bible, when anyone but God claims the authority to forgive sins or to be God, it is called blasphemy. *The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. Joh 10:33, Mat 9:2-3* Is this beast a counterfeit intercessor? (...speaking great things and blasphemies... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme... v.5-6)

Like Jesus, this anti-Christ comes up out of the water. Like Jesus, he is given miraculous power from his father for 3.5 prophetic years. Like Jesus, he appears to die, yet resurrects. Like Jesus, he then receives worldwide wonder and worship. Like Jesus, he works miracles, wears crowns, and represents his father. And, like Jesus, he is the voice, authority, and intercessor of his father. This impostor son; this prophet, king, and priest; this beast; man of sin; son of perdition; anti-Christ, inspired and empowered by fallen angels - is not an obvious enemy, but a wonderfully cunning counterfeit. In all cases, Jesus is the genuine Son of God the Father. This wolf in sheep's clothing is the son of satan; the father of lies. His attack is not directed towards the world, but toward the Word, and the people who profess the Word. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen 3:15*

Conclusion: We should not be surprised to find this anti-Christ today to be the most notable Christian organization (church) on earth; the same that has been around for over 1,500 years. As God, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, we should not be surprised to find this anti-Christ still claiming this day to be even higher than Jesus. Self-acclaiming to be the supreme voice, authority, and intercessor of the God of the universe, we should not be surprised to find this anti-Christ receiving worldwide wonder and worship that is growing more and more every day. This anti-Christ betrays Jesus Christ 'with a kiss'. We should expect to easily see all the world wondering after an alluringly attractive 'holy' innocence; bewildering beauty speaking softly with flattering friendliness; delivering deadly demonic deceptions. After all, didn't the God of the universe, hundreds and hundreds of years ago, prophesy that it would be exactly this way? The parallels between this anti-Christ and Jesus Christ are remarkable. We have just scratched the surface. Further study magnifies the identify of this anti-Christ in even more astounding detail. For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, the Bible is irrefutably the revelation of the only omniscient God; our Father. *And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 2Thes 2:10*