

Spirit-Filled Pastor Reveals 7 Ways to Identify the Spirit of the Antichrist

Many believe the Antichrist will be a literal, global leader, but the spirit of the antichrist already permeates the world with its corrosive influence. We need keen spiritual discernment to recognize and resist it.

Jesus warned that the No. 1 sign indicating His soon return is mass deception (Matt. 24:4-5). He predicted deception will be so rampant in the last days that even the elect would be deceived "if possible" (Matt. 24:24).

Thankfully, those who live by biblical truth and listen to the Holy Spirit will not be deceived. Discernment is "the ability to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, truth from error; to perceive, detect or recognize." The more familiar we are with a genuine item, the easier it is to spot a fake. The more we know and love the true Christ, the less vulnerable we will be to the spell of the Antichrist.

The term "antichrist" is found five times in Scripture, all in John's letters (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3, 2 John 1:7). It means "an opponent of the Messiah, one who stands against or in opposition to all Christ represents." This Satanic spirit is the driving force behind the evil in the world. While the Antichrist will be a literal person, the antichrist spirit influences religions, governments, education, literature, music, movies, entertainment and society.

The spirit of the antichrist is anti-God, anti-Bible, anti-prayer, anti-morality, anti-biblical marriage, anti-authority. John explained, "This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and is already in the world" (1 John 4:3).

Here's the million-dollar question—who is the Antichrist? The Bible doesn't reveal his identity, but it does provide insight into his nature and agenda. The reason the Bible discusses him is not to foster speculation about his identity but to warn us of his deception.

Whenever a villainous leader rises to power, people wonder if he is the Antichrist. Some thought it was Hitler, Mussolini, Lenin, Stalin, Fidel Castro, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden and many other villains. In the 1980s, some swore Mikhail Gorbachev was the Antichrist due to the strange birthmark on his forehead. Others insisted it was Ronald Wilson Reagan because there were six letters in each of his names equaling 666. This kind of crazy speculation is futile.

While the Antichrist could be alive and in power, the Bible states, "he might be revealed in his time (2 Thess. 2:6). Meanwhile, it's more important to recognize the characteristics of the spirit of the antichrist that is working in the world:

1. **A demonic hatred against God and His people:** John wrote of the Antichrist, "It was granted to him to wage war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe and tongue and nation" (Rev. 13:7). Because Satan hates God and can't touch Him, he attacks His people instead. The spirit of the antichrist fuels anti-Semitism and persecution against the church. History is soaked with the blood of martyrs who were killed for their love for and loyalty to God. The Pharaohs enslaved and killed Hebrews in ancient Egypt. The Caesars of Rome executed Christians for sport. Hitler exterminated six million Jews in his hellish concentration camps. The same sinister spirit spurs the racial hatred of white supremacists, the KKK, neo-Nazis, antifa, ISIS, jihadists and other radical groups.
2. **Efforts to remove and replace God:** Paul described the Antichrist as "the son of destruction, who opposes and

exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped" (2 Thess. 2:3b-4a). Again, this spirit is against God and everything good. It's the spirit behind the efforts to remove "In God We Trust" from our currency, "one nation under God" from our pledge of allegiance, the Ten Commandments from courtrooms and classrooms, prayer before high school football games and other public events, nativity scenes from public squares and anything else that honors God in society. Any person, religion or belief system that denies Jesus is the Christ and came in the flesh, or reduces His role in salvation, or exalts man above God is anti-Christ (1 John 2:22, 4:1-3; 2 John 7).

3. **Lawlessness and anarchy:** Paul called the Antichrist "the man of sin" and "the lawless one" (2 Thess. 2:3, 8). This spirit drives the anarchy we see erupting worldwide in crime, rioting, looting, violence and rebellion against authority. It consumes outlaws who thrive on creating chaos and anarchists who seek to destroy the systems of civilized society.
4. **Mass deception:** Paul warned about the Antichrist's deceit, "[The lawless one] is coming is in accordance with the working of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love for the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie: that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:9-12). The masses are swallowing Satan's lies hook, line and sinker (Rev. 12:15-17). Millions believe the lies of evolution, that abortion is not murder, that salvation is optional, that it's OK to get drunk, use drugs and have sex with people you're not married to. Many will believe the damnable lie that the Antichrist is god and/or that they are demigods which will usher in divine judgment (Dan.

7:24-27, 8:23-25; Rev. 20:10-15). Daniel 8:25 warns, "By his cunning, he shall cause deceit to succeed under his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in a time of peace."

5. **Blasphemy against God and sacred things:** "He was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. ... He opened his mouth to speak blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven" (Rev. 13:5-6). Blasphemy is "the act of cursing or reviling God, assuming to oneself the rights or qualities of God, or irreverent behavior toward anything held sacred." People who constantly use profanity have a blasphemous spirit. This often manifests in movies, music and shows which feature frequent cursing and taking God's name in vain. Blessing should flow from our lips, not cursing (Eph. 4:29-31, Jam. 2:8-11).
6. **Idolatry/false worship:** There is a global war over worship, a spiritual tug-of-war for the souls of men. God commands our worship, and Satan covets our worship. Spurgeon said, "Consider how precious a soul must be when both God and the devil are after it." If Satan can't keep people in bondage to sinful lifestyles, he'll get them mixed up in false religions. Satan tries to prevent our worship, pervert our worship and/or pirate our worship for himself. The Antichrist "opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself as God" (2 Thess. 2:4). He will deceive and coerce the masses to worship him and take his mark or face execution (Dan. 11:36-37, Rev. 13:15-16).
7. **An ugly, beastly nature:** In Revelation 13:1-8, the Antichrist is portrayed as a hideous seven-headed, 10-horned beast that rises out of the sea of humanity. Heads and horns speak of kings or kingdoms in Bible prophecy indicating that he will control many nations. The scary imagery is of a ravenous beast which survives by devouring other things. Daniel 8:23 calls him a king

of “fierce countenance” referring to his ruthless rule. This shows the ugly nature of man’s kingdoms—cruel, corrupt, bloodthirsty, power hungry, brutal, savage. Man’s kingdoms are built by conquest, war and bloodshed, and on the sweat, tears and taxes of their subjects. Christ’s kingdom is built on the lamblike nature of love.

The good news is there is a restraining force preventing the Antichrist and evil from taking over. “Now you know what restrains him that he might be revealed in his time. ... Only He who is now restraining him will do so until He is taken out of the way. Then the lawless one will be revealed” (2 Thess. 2:6-8a). Notice the personal deity pronoun “He.” That restraining force is the Holy Spirit in and through the church.

He is using a righteous remnant whose prayers are delaying judgment and restraining evil. Don’t be too worried about the mark of the beast because we’ve already been marked with the blood of Jesus. As John wrote of the spirit of the antichrist, he prophesied our victory: “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

The Spirit of Christ in us is greater than the spirit of the antichrist in the world! {eoa}

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