

The Antichrist *Christian*

by Stella Paterson

The title of this article is unusual, I know. Some may see it as an oxymoron. But it is the one the Lord led me to use. Is there such a person as a *antichrist Christian*? Yes! Bear with me and it will become evident. Every individual who considers him/herself to be a *Christian* is encouraged to read every word with an open mind and with ears attuned to the voice of the Holy Spirit, so that we might receive the message the Lord would have us hear.

First of all, let us look at the word "antichrist." The Greek definition for the word is "opponent of Messiah." And that is the basis for this whole message. We must forget the traditional understanding of "Antichrist" as being some future tyrant who will declare himself as "God," seating himself in a temple built by man. The Bible does not tell us that the "son of perdition," the "beast" of Revelation, the "abomination of desolation" of which Daniel prophesied, or any other referenced creature is one and the same as "the Antichrist" we hear about--not only in the *church* but also in *the world*. We dare not think for one minute that the enemy of our souls, the one called *Satan*, is not rejoicing at our naïve acceptance of such doctrine. He knows the truth about who *antichrist* is, and is delighted that we have been blinded to the truth. And we can be assured; that very truth is something regarding which we must seek revelation from the Holy Spirit.

It is probable that very few would deny that we live in fearful times. The breakneck speed of the decline we have been witnessing has garnered the attention of nations around the world. But what is this realization doing in the minds of the peoples of the earth? Is there an awakening to the fact that we cannot remain as we are--without hope in this topsy-turvy world? Is there even a glimmer of realization that Someone is waiting for us to acknowledge Him, so that if our lives come crashing down around us we have a steadfast hope that is firmly centered in Christ Jesus whose Life has become our Life? Is there a safe haven? Yes, but what is the cost?

Before we get to the essence of the message regarding the *antichrist Christian*, let's look at how the enemy's plan was put in place thousands of years ago.

Lucifer

The Hebrew word *heylel* means "(in the sense of *brightness*); the *morning star*." The King James Bible translators used "Lucifer" in translation of *heylel*, in Isaiah 14, to describe the beautiful creature that once held a prominent place among all the other heavenly angels. That was, until pride and self-exaltation caused him to say in his heart "***I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most***

High." (Isaiah 14:13-14 RV) As the 12th verse tells us, he had *fallen from heaven* and been *cut down to the ground* because he *layed low* [weakened] *the nations*. Because of the declarations he had made **in his heart**, he would *be brought down to hell, to the uttermost parts of the pit*.

Notice how Satan did not speak aloud his intent to become like *the most High*. He simply "**said in his heart**" what his desire was. Our omnipresent God knows even the thoughts of our hearts; just as He did Satan's thoughts.

As we know, Satan, having been *cut down to the ground* appeared in the form of a serpent in the Garden of Eden. He was now hell-bent on revenge against God, and used his deceptive powers to seduce Eve (and ultimately Adam) into eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan had failed at rising to the heights he so desired. And now was his opportunity to cause man to become as *God, knowing good and evil*.

Man's aspiration to be *as God* resulted in his being expelled from the Garden and the presence of his Creator. As the Lord God had said, man *died*. His spiritual life had been lost; *self* became enthroned, and with his knowledge of good and evil man would live a life of self-exaltation, in opposition to the God in whose image he had been created. As David said in Psalm 68:4, ". . . his name is JAH." He is the *Self-existent One*, as we see in the meaning of the Name *Jah*. For man to exalt his own *self* in any way, is to oppose the only true *Self-existent One*.

In the beginning, during man's time in the Garden of Eden, there was only the Creator and His creation, man, with whom He had perfect communion. In the end, when time is no more, there will be only Jesus, the Re-Creator, having perfect communion with those who are His very own. All the things created by mortal man will no longer exist; the things we have strived to build and amass for our comfort will be gone--worthless. All the things we did in the strength of flesh, believing we were pleasing God, will be meaningless when we come face to face with Jesus. All of our striving to *look good* to others will result in our hearing these words from His lips: "Depart from me; I never knew you!"

Only the immortal God is able to create the Eternal. There will be no more churches--only re-created man and God, as one for eternity. If we were to 'drill down' through the layers of the things of this life, we would discover that, ultimately, the only thing remaining is man. Messiah came to redeem and dwell in the individuals whom He created for Himself. Gone forever will be *self*, and man's *self will*, which is the driving force in mortal flesh.

The work of God

In Luke, chapter 10 we read of the seventy chosen by Jesus to go out and minister. After a time they returned, joyful, "*saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in your name.*" Jesus replied to them, "***I beheld Satan fallen as***

lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but **rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**" (Luke 10:18-20)

It was Jesus' power that went with the seventy, making *their ministry* a success. And Jesus was quick to point out that He had witnessed Satan's fall to earth because of a quest for power and authority. Knowing Him was of greater importance than exercising power and authority over Satan's demonic crowd. Do we understand what He is saying here? Do we 'get it' that the things we do *in His Name* are of lesser significance than our relationship with Him? Are we *opposing Messiah* through our deeds, falling into pride because, as the seventy did, we see how effective *our* ministry is?

This brings to mind the passage where Jesus was asked the question, "*What must we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, **This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom he has sent.***" (John 6:28b-29) Trust in Christ IS the work of God--not anything we do, even in obedience to Him. Our obedience is part of our relationship of surrender to Him. The work is His, and He WILL accomplish it. The danger for us is always that we might become *self*-important as we live in this body of flesh. Jesus crucified flesh on our behalf to reconcile us to God. The only thing standing between us and God is our filthy flesh, rooted in sinful *self*, which we too easily refuse to surrender to Him. The Spirit of Christ raised Him from the dead after He willingly gave up the 'ghost'. We must be willing to give up the 'ghost' of our life of *self* and flesh, so that the Spirit of Christ can return life to our 'dead' bodies. As Paul so aptly said, "*They that are in the flesh cannot please God.*" (Romans 8:8)

The *antichrist Christian* is one who believes he is born again but lives his life as though the flesh were everything. But as the above verse said, he can never please God--no matter how hard he tries. The truth of the matter is this: "*Wherefore if any man is **in Christ**, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.*" (2 Corinthians 5:17) Why? Because "**you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**" (Colossians 3:3) Now ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what this 4th verse means. "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory.*" It is the Lord's will that we know the mystery of the gospel.

To [the saints] whom God willed to make known what are the riches [Greek: 'valuable *bestowment*'] of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is **Christ in you, the hope** [Greek: 'expectation'] **of glory**; whom we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect [Greek: 'complete'] **in Christ Jesus**; for which I also labor, striving according to His working which is working **in me** with power. Colossians 1:27-29 EMTV

The temple of God

The New Testament is very clear when it tells us the *temple of God* is not a building. So, with that in mind, there is no question that the *temple of God*, referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, is not a building. It is the place where Christ desires to dwell--in man, to make him a new creature. What more intimate fellowship could we have with the living God, if not with Him dwelling inside of us? These two passages in Acts are powerful.

Howbeit the Most High **does not dwell in houses made with hands**; as the prophet said, The heaven is my throne, and the earth the footstool of my feet: what manner of house will you build me? saith the Lord: Or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things? You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, **you always resist the Holy Ghost: just as your fathers did.** Act 7:48-51

The God who made the world and all the things in it, Him being Lord of heaven and earth, **does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands, nor by the hands of men is He served**, as though He needed anything, for He gives to all life, and breath, with respect to all things. And He made from one blood every nation of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, and He ordained their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, in order for them to seek the Lord, if perhaps indeed they might grope for Him and find Him, and yet being indeed not far from each one of us; for **in Him we live and move and have our being.** . . Act 17:24-28a EMTV

Only He can make His temple, and only He has a right to dwell in that temple. "*Know you not that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*" (1 Corinthians 3:16)

Flesh versus Spirit

In Moses' Law, Israel was instructed to not eat blood. If anyone did, he would be cut off from among God's people. Why? "*For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*" (Leviticus 17:11)

Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh so that He could pour out His blood, putting flesh to death on our behalf. He was the one pure Lamb. He shed His own blood to make atonement for man. He did His part, and now He asks that we put our complete trust in Him, allowing Him to live His life in and through us. "*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, so that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, because **He abides with you and shall be in you.***" (John 14:16-17 EMTV)

Faith is relying on the One who dwells within us, to live His life through us. He is constantly at work 'renovating' His abode, bringing death to every area of *self* that is surrendered to Him moment by moment. The 'renovating' never stops. The Spirit of Grace continues His work of regeneration. Paul said, "*Where sin abounds [increases], Grace does much more abound [increase].*" (Romans 5:20) Hallelujah!

The Grace of God, in the person of the Holy Spirit of Christ, desires to accomplish His work in all who name the Name of Christ. But do all surrender to His working? Or is our flesh 'lusting against the Spirit,' while the Spirit 'lusts against the flesh?' (Galatians 5:17) The definition of the Greek word for *lust* is "to set the heart upon." This tells us that the flesh resists [sets the heart against] the Spirit. How many resist Him, opposing the very thing Messiah came to do?

Who is opposing Messiah and why?

There is grave danger in pursuing our own way, living what we *think* is the Christian life because some apostate preacher or pastor said it was the path to take. The Bible is trustworthy and the Holy Spirit is the only credible witness to truth.

Religious flesh is still flesh; in fact, it is the worst kind of flesh. As Paul said in his epistle to the Romans, "*But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is alive because of righteousness.*" (Romans 8:9-10)

In ignorance, many believe they are Christians because they said the "sinner's prayer" and were told they were now "born again." They read the Bible as though it were a book of promises for blessing, or a book of rules by which to live; albeit in their flesh. They have exalted *self* through "good behavior" to the level of a "good Christian." In truth, the *antichrist Christian* is one who refuses to humble himself under the mighty hand of God. "*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. . .*" (1 Peter 5:6)

Believing that God is there to shower only good things on His people, the *antichrist Christian* seeks the gifts rather than the Giver who desires to give Himself to them as their Life, if only they would surrender *self* to Him.

The *antichrist Christian* is pleased to show outwardly, for the benefit of others, that he has forsaken the obvious, outward 'sins,' while inwardly he resists the call to forsake **all** of *self*.

The *antichrist Christian* desires his 'best life now,' all the while being oblivious to the fact that Jesus never once promised prosperity here and now. He promised

His own Life in abundance, and His Grace to keep us and prepare us for eternity with Him. (John 10:10)

The *antichrist Christian* prays according to the lusts of the flesh. He will pray self-centered prayers; prayers in sympathy with another; prayers for relief from affliction in the flesh--while God may be afflicting his flesh in order to 'kill' it. James said, "*You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.*" (James 4:3) We need to be pouring out our hearts to God for His will to be done in earth as it is in heaven. Only He knows His perfect will for us. "*For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*" (Romans 8:26-27)

The *antichrist Christian* only sees the faults in others, while using 'rose-colored glasses' to look at his own [self-]righteousness. He firmly believes in the 'virtues' in himself that only he can 'see.' They are not quite as evident to everyone because they are not true virtues; they are a part of the façade he hides behind. He may have heard of "self-abandonment" and believes he has 'worked through' and accomplished it on his own. But as a writer of long ago said, "*Self-abandonment is not accomplished by means of painful reflections and continual struggles; it is only by refraining from self-contemplation, and from desiring to master ourselves in our own way, that we lose ourselves in God.*" ~ Francois de Fenelon (1651-1715)

In every *antichrist Christian* can be found the words "I will" prominently displayed in his personal vocabulary. Though ignorant of their existence and their blatantly opposing effect on the One he claims to love and serve, the root of "I will" can be traced back to Lucifer. Like Lucifer, the *antichrist Christian* may simply purpose in his heart, saying "I will," but God knows our hearts.

If our desire is to follow Christ, we must be willing to go all the way, as He did. When facing His death on the cross, He said, "*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless **not my will, but thine, be done.***" (Luke 22:42)

The choice

The word *antichrist* is found exclusively in John's epistles, and in no other place; not even in the book of Revelation which was also written by John. If we read John's First and Second epistles, as with any letter, it would become evident that *antichrist* is not what it has become today. To whet your appetite, read this:

And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment [that we love one another], even as you heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. For many deceivers [Greek:

'misleaders'] are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. **This is the deceiver and the antichrist.** Look to yourselves, that you lose not the things which we have wrought, but that you receive a full reward. Whosoever goes onward and abides not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abides in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. 2 John 1:6-9

The idea that "the Antichrist" is some man, somewhere in the future--not present in the now--is one of the greatest deceptions. It is a myth that has been eagerly embraced by creatures of flesh who have not received revelation that *antichrist* is firmly seated in *self*.

The man of sin, the son of perdition is not some future tyrant--he is the antichrist Christian, ruled by the antichrist spirit to keep him from dying to *self*. The falling away (apostasy) of which Paul wrote has taken place, and *self* has become enthroned in the lives of Christians, now more than ever. There is a deep need for *death to self* to become a reality for all who call themselves Christians. Jesus said so clearly, "*If any man would come after me, let him deny [Greek: 'disown'] himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.*" (Matthew 16:24b-25)

Are we so enamored with *self* and the efforts of our flesh that we will deny Jesus His rightful place in us? Is the façade of a *Christian* life we have erected so treasured that we would risk losing our eternal life with Him? As John said, "*He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son.*" (1 John 2:22b)

The choice is simple--we either deny *self* or we deny Christ. "*But whoever denies [Greek: 'rejects'] Me before men, I also will deny him before My Father who is in heaven.*" (Matthew 10:33 EMTV)

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