

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

(John 11:25-26)

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

Don't be Deceived – The Spirit of Antichrist

(Part 1 – The Deception of Mere Outward Reform)

September 14, 2025

Sermon Text: 1 John 2:18-20 & Matthew 12:43-45

Scripture Reading: 2 Thes 2

1 John 2:18-20 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last

hour. (19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (20) But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

This morning I want to begin a series of sermons on the subject of *antichrist* – THE Antichrist and the spirit of antichrist. Let me explain why.

We as a reformed church are, in regard to the doctrines of the last things – the return of Christ, the millennium, the new heavens and

earth, the final judgment, etc., *eschatology* in other words – as a reformed church we are *amillennial* in our eschatology.

We are not *postmillennial* as some supposedly reformed churches are. That is, we do not believe that the preaching of the gospel by the church is going to eventually usher in some golden age in this present world so that the vast majority of people and nations will be converted to Christ and an epoch of the kingdom of God will continue in this world for thousands if not hundreds of thousands of years, at the end of which Christ will return. And we do not hold to the postmillennial false teaching that essentially all, if not all, of the Bible's prophecies concerning the last days have already been fulfilled, especially at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70AD.

Nor are we *premillennial* as is the large majority of evangelical churches today. Premillennialism maintains that at any time Christ is going to rapture the church out of this world (His first, invisible

return) following which Antichrist and the great tribulation will ensue until Christ returns a second time (third time actually) to effect the binding of Satan and the literal 1,000 year reign of Christ from Jerusalem and the restoration of glory of earthly Israel.

Our eschatology, which we believe is the bible's doctrine of the millennium and last days, is *amillennialism*. Why is this of vital importance and what does it have to do with this subject of antichrist? Simply this:

Both postmillennialism and premillennialism insist that the church need not worry about the Antichrist. Why? Because postmills teach that he has already come in 70AD and before (cf Antiochus Ephiphanes, etc). And premills teach that the church will be raptured out of this world before the Antichrist is revealed and establishes his worldwide kingdom.

Therefore, everyone who buys into either one of these systems is not going to be on guard against the

lies and deceptions of Antichrist and his spirit, which is now very active in the world. Such people are going to be caught unawares.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, (10) and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

And therefore we of all people must be watchful and wise:

1 Thessalonians 5:3-4 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. (4) But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

NOTE: I want to give credit in this series to David Engelsma. He wrote a two-volume thorough study of eschatology: *The Church's Hope: The Reformed*

Doctrine of The End which you can find on Amazon [Reformed Free Publishing]. It is the absolute best treatment of biblical teaching on end times doctrine that I have read. If you want to get really firmly grounded in the Bible's teaching on this subject, I highly recommend these two volumes. They are not at all superficial and yet they are not difficult to read. In this study I am going to be relying much on Engelsma's help.

The Bible has quite a lot more to say about the antichrist than you might realize:

- Matthew 24/Mark 13
- 2 Thessalonians 2
- 1 & 2 John
- Revelation 13, 17 & 19
- Ezekiel 38 & 39
- Several references in Daniel

I. The Spirit of Antichrist is Afoot Now

Let's begin with the Apostle John's warnings about antichrist. These scriptures specifically use the term *antichrist* which means either

“against” Christ or “instead of” Christ (ie, a counterfeit Christ). Here are the texts:

(1Jn 2:18) Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that **antichrist** is coming, so now many **antichrists** have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

(1Jn 2:22) Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the **antichrist**, he who denies the Father and the Son.

(1Jn 4:3) and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the **antichrist**, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

(2Jn 1:7) For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the **antichrist**.

Let's begin by focusing on this section. Listen again:

1Jn 2:18-27 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that

antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

(19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (20) But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

(21) I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

(22) Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. (23) No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

(24) Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. (25) And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

(26) I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. (27) But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

First then let's consider John's overall, general teaching about antichrist. We will plan to return to the details later in this series.

1. There is a specific Antichrist

“...you have heard that antichrist is coming...”. While there are many deceivers/antichrists, there is one who will come – THE antichrist. John tells his audience that they have already heard that this Antichrist is coming. He says the same thing later:

1Jn 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, **which you heard was coming** and now is in the world already.

Where had they heard this previously? Perhaps in Christ's warnings about false Christs in Matthew 24, but more specifically from the Apostle Paul, if his letters had been circulated to them by this time –

2Th 2:3-5 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. (5) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

A specific “man of lawlessness, the son of destruction.” This is the Antichrist who is coming.

2. There are many antichrists now

These antichrists are *people* who are counterfeit “instead of” christs. People who had professed Christ

and who had been in the visible church but eventually “went out from” Christ’s true people because they were not real Christians. This is something we must all be wise about. *It is to be expected that some (probably many) who claim to be of us, who claim to be Christians, will eventually reject Christ’s people and leave. If this never happens in a local church, if everyone always stays and it is all one big happy family, something is wrong.* The Lord permits this because He winnows His church and exposes what is false.

3. Christ’s true people have the ability to discern

“But you have been anointed by the Holy One...you know the truth...the anointing that you received from him abides in you and you have no need that anyone should teach you...”

Christ’s sheep hear His voice. They will not listen to nor follow a counterfeit.

4. The Antichrist is of the Devil and thus is a Liar and Deceiver

This is in many ways the heart of what this sermon series is all about. The Liar. The Deceiver. Jesus said this about Satan:

Joh 8:44b ...He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

If anyone is not born again and thus indwelt by the Spirit of truth, they WILL be deceived and end in hell. We are in a world immersed in Satan’s lies. His deceptions are growing stronger and stronger. It is becoming more and more difficult to discern truth from error. Lies are called truth and truth is called a lie. Good is called evil and evil is called good.

Mat 6:23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is

darkness, how great is the darkness!

There, then, are some of the basics. THE Antichrist comes. MANY antichrists are active right now. And the focus of antichrist lies always concerns the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“...Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.”

NOTE: The masterpiece deception of Satan has been and continues to be the Roman Catholic false church. And it is plain that this age-old heresy is renewing itself very actively right now. There are many Roman Catholics in the conservative news media, in the White House – in the personages of people we have respect for in the realm of politics and conservatism. Rome always has donned the outward garb of the culture in which it lives, but inwardly Rome is always Rome and never changes.

Rome is a false gospel. It is of antichrist just as the reformers always maintained:

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner;⁷ neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. [London Confession of Faith]

Rome denies the gospel of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone and in fact condemns anyone who believes it. Here is the Council of Trent:

Canon 30. “If any one saith, that, after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise, that there

remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened (to him); let him be anathema.”

Canon 32. “If any one saith, that the good works of one that is justified are in such manner the gifts of God, as that they are not also the good merits of him that is justified; or, that the said justified, by the good works which he performs through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life, ...and also an increase of glory; let him be anathema.”

For all of Rome’s talk of someone who has died being with the Lord, the fact is that Rome really can only announce that the person is in purgatory for an indeterminate period to pay with continuing temporal punishment for their sins. In other words, Jesus did not pay it

all. Christ’s Cross is not sufficient. This is what John also means when he says that the antichrist is the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. The Mediator. The Redeemer.

Do not be deceived. Anyone holding to the doctrines of Rome cannot be saved because they are clinging to a false gospel which requires man’s own works added to faith.

Gal 1:6-9 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— (7) not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. (8) But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. (9) As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

The Lord Jesus warned us –

Mat 24:4-5 And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. (5) For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.

You are hearing increasingly in the media and from local churches and pastors that Rome is in fact of Christ. Roman Catholics in prominent positions are speaking of Jesus Christ, and professing Christians who are evangelicals are joining together with them. But this is antichrist’s spirit. It is deception.

A Favorite Antichrist Deception

Listen carefully to the Lord Jesus’ words here and be warned:

Mat 12:43-45 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. (44) Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. (45) Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell

there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

A favorite deception of the antichrist is to establish Christianity without Christ. If you listened to this last week’s Romans study, you heard me read these words from Lloyd-Jones as he expounded on Romans 7:4 –

“Salvation is in Christ alone. It is ‘in Him’ from beginning to end. As you talk to other people whose whole position (ie, their claim to be a Christian) you may feel to be questionable, the first thing to do with them is to make them talk. Get them to talk about what they conceive a Christian to be; and if they consider themselves as Christians get them to state why they regard themselves as Christians. Encourage them to talk along those lines, and as they do so concentrate on one thing only – *does the name of the Lord Jesus Christ come into it at all or not, or how much?* You will find quite frequently that people will talk at

great length without ever mentioning His name. The test which I have always found to be crucial is to ask such a person this question – ‘If you had to die tonight and to stand before God, what would you say? On what would you rely? What would your position be?’ Put that question to them and you will find quite often that they will attempt to answer without even mentioning the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is only one thing to say about such people, and that is that they are not Christians. Christianity is Christ. He is central, He is vital, He is all in all. It does not matter how good a life may be, how moral it may appear to be, if it is not *entirely* dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ and what HE has done, it is not Christianity. It may be morality, it may be some other religion, but it is not Christianity. The thing that makes Christianity Christian is the centrality, the cruciality of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” [Romans – The Law: Its Functions and Limits, Zondervan]

See it? The great antichrist deception of mere *outward, formal religion without being born again*. It is a mere sweeping of the exterior, a temporary eviction of an evil spirit, but without a New Tenant, the Holy Spirit, moving in. All that it does is set up a person for 7-fold bondage to the devil.

Next time we will look further into what John wrote about the antichrist. For now, be warned. Be on the alert. Don’t be deceived. Evil is afoot all around and devil is like a chained up wolf straining to be set free so he can once more deceive the nations and bring in the worldwide, yet short-lived, kingdom of the Antichrist.