

# Who Is Antichrist?

by Stella Paterson

What a time to be alive! We see all around us signs and events coming to pass as foretold in the Bible. There are countless books, web sites and ministers, each proclaiming their own spin on what is transpiring or is about to transpire. If we were to take the time to absorb what each one says, our heads would be spinning and we would be no further ahead. Each one is so certain that he is correct in his understanding of "end-time prophecy." But which one is actually correct? Does any one have the "inside track" with God so that they can identify some mystery "person" in answer to the popular question "Who is the Antichrist?" Is "Antichrist" the "beast" of Revelation? Is he the "abomination of desolation" of which Daniel wrote and to which Jesus referred?

In this article, I will be sharing what the Lord has shown me. From the Bible, I will be exposing who antichrist is. This is something the Lord quickened to my spirit several years ago, but in my book I barely touched on it. The time has come to expand on this very important matter.

Lest I come across sounding like some kind of arrogant "know-it-all," I beg your indulgence. My prayer is that this article will minister to you more than any other that I have written - even my book, for those who have read it.

Now let's search the Scriptures together and see what the Lord has revealed to this point, using the basics to lay the foundation for understanding.

## Why we are here

In Revelation 4:11, we read "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure** they are and were created.*" These words in the last book of the Bible tell us the reason for Genesis, chapter one. All else must be examined in light of this one truth. Never mind everything else that has since transpired or exists in modern-day cultures. As Paul the Apostle said in Colossians 1:15-17, "*[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for **in him were all things created, in the heavens, and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things have been created through him, and unto him: and he is before all things, and in him all things consist.***" He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

In the Garden of Eden, man was created in the image of God, for His own purpose and pleasure, as we just read. We have in us a need for God because He created us for Himself. We have an inherent need to worship something or Someone, but what has man chosen to worship?

As we covered in another article, we know what happened in Adam's time. Because of the enemy's temptation, man came into the knowledge of good and evil - a curse which every person since that time has inherited at birth. It is the curse of death, as God warned Adam and Eve when He forbade them to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The simple matter is that man is born a creature of flesh, "dead" from birth, and the only answer is "Life" which comes through Jesus Christ. Let's look a little closer, and let the Word of God reveal the "thread" which leads to the understanding of who this "antichrist" is.

### Definition of "antichrist"

The Greek word "christos" is translated "Christ" and means "anointed." Christos comes from another word, "chrio", which means "*to smear or rub with oil*" and is translated "anoint." The Greek word "anti" gives us the English prefix "anti" which with "christ" forms "antichrist." John 1:41 tells us that "Messiah" is translated "Christ" in the New Testament. Therefore, the resulting definition of "antichrist" is "*opponent of Messiah*" or, in other words, someone who opposes Messiah.

The Law and the Prophets foretold of Messiah's coming, and in great detail told us why and how. As we have said before, the Law was the tutor to point the Jews to Christ. Their sacrifices of blood to make atonement for sin, using specified animals, were meant to "tutor" them in anticipation of the one pure Lamb who would one day come, making a once-for-all sacrifice to put away sin.

In the study of the word "sin" we learned that the "sin" which Jesus "put away" was the "abstract" sin of flesh and self. It was not the sins (deeds) of any person. As Romans 8:3 tells us, He came "*in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin condemned [Greek: 'judged'] sin in the flesh.*" He paid the price for all mankind by taking the judgment for sin in His own flesh. THAT IS THE REASON HE CAME - He put to death the source of sin on behalf of all. Now the way was paved for every person to inherit Life by coming to Him and putting their trust in His atonement, receiving His Life in the person of the Holy Spirit.

But what has man done in response? Have ALL mankind come to Him? We know the answer is "No". Instead, man has opposed Messiah who came to free him from self and flesh.

The prophet Isaiah foretold this in Isaiah 53:3: "*He is despised and **rejected** of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*" And many centuries later, Paul wrote "*For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the **enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition**, whose God is the belly [Greek: figuratively 'the heart', or could we say 'self and flesh?'], and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly*

things." (Philippians 3:18-19) Those who are *enemies of the cross of Christ* without question "oppose Messiah". SELF is more important to them and, because of it and in spite of what they may profess, Jesus is rejected.

### Who is antichrist?

Jesus the Messiah's beloved friend John wrote the Gospel of John, the epistles of First, Second and Third John, as well as the book of Revelation. He seemingly understood Jesus better than did any of the others, and his writings shed much light on the subject of "antichrist." The word "antichrist" can be found only in his epistles.

Let's take a closer look at John's words in 1 John 2.

*"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* (verses 15-16) John is speaking of how "self," with the "lusts" and love of the things of this life, is not of God. Verse 17 says *"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."*

John's very next words are *"Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that **antichrist** cometh, even now have there arisen **many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last hour. 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 they might be made manifest how that they all are not of us. And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things"*. (verses 18-20) John is showing the difference between flesh and Spirit. Those "not of" them had no Holy Spirit - they were flesh, never having been born anew and becoming a part of the fellowship of John's time. Yes, they may have even played the part but it was a lie. Do you know anyone like that; playing the part while merely being entrenched in churchianity?

Then John followed with this: *"I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because **no lie is of the truth**. Who is the liar but he that denieth [Greek; 'rejects'] that Jesus is the Christ? This is **antichrist**, even he that denieth [Greek: 'rejects'] the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth ['rejects'] the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth [Greek: 'acknowledges'] the Son hath the Father also."* (verses 21-23) How does one reject Jesus, as in the context of John's words? It is possible to "confess" Jesus as "Lord" while rejecting Him, or "opposing" Him, through refusal to surrender SELF to the crucifying power of the Cross. As John clearly states, "He is antichrist."

John mentions "antichrist" again in his second epistle, where he continues his message on "love" which is the main theme in all three epistles. He wrote, "*not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we **love one another**. And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is **the commandment**, even as ye heard from the beginning, that **ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are gone forth** into the world, even they that confess [Greek: 'acknowledge'] **not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh**. This is the deceiver and the **antichrist**."* (2 John 5b-7)

Would John suddenly change the subject in a paragraph about the commandment to "love," and begin speaking of some world leader who would come two thousand years later? No! It is obvious there is a correlation in his message on love and the identity of "antichrist" with the character traits he would demonstrate.

In his First, Second and Third epistles, John speaks more about love than does any other book in the New Testament. A close second is his "Gospel of John." We know that God is Love and, when we receive His Son who is also Love, His Life replaces "self" in one who is born from above. In view of this, I believe we could say that the opposite of "self" is "Love". Love is the evidence in one who is born anew, as Jesus revealed when He said His disciples would be known by the love they have one for another. (John 13:35) Common sense would tell us that those NOT born anew by God's Spirit remain dead in flesh and self, and they are opposing Messiah because they have rejected Him.

Are you beginning to get the picture? It is so much easier and less disturbing to us if we look outside of SELF when attempting to identify "the Antichrist." Self and flesh have always been the greatest opponent of Messiah because flesh is precisely what He came to free us from. Again, let me say that self and flesh came with the knowledge of good and evil and, ultimately, separation from God. Jesus brought reconciliation by putting to death flesh in Himself. Why else would Jesus cry, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" (Matthew 27:46) The moment had come when Jesus, in the likeness of sinful flesh, experienced the same separation from the Father. This should tell us how utterly sinful flesh is! Think back to Noah's day when God regretted making man because he was nothing but evil flesh, with the exception of Noah's household.

Let's take this thought a little further. Whether "fallen ministers" who through the lusts of the flesh fall into immorality; false ministers who preach from the store of SELF and flesh rather than walk by the Spirit, or lukewarm "Christians" performing deeds in the name of "serving Jesus," the common denominator is "FLESH". In all such instances, the idols of "self" have risen above the call of the Spirit to let God be God. John's first epistle ends with the charge, "*My little children, guard yourselves from idols.*"

What could be more "antichrist" than creatures of flesh who reject the One who died to free them?

When the Lord showed me a "picture" of the "church" as He sees her, He allowed me the privilege of feeling His anguish over those who believe they are His but do not really know Him. They are opposing Him. They are "antichrist" because they are wrapped up in SELF, believing they are "serving" Him. He wants a relationship with them. He wants to dwell in them so that His Love can be shed abroad in their hearts, and be through them a river of Living Water to those outside the fold. But they care only for themselves and their deeds. Jesus said "*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity* [Hebrew meaning suggests: 'practice nothingness']." (Matthew 7:22-23)

How many are there who are causing multitudes of souls to turn their focus to some worldly figure "out there somewhere"? Do they find it more exciting to attract crowds to their dramatic accounts of "prophecy revealed" rather than preach the gospel of the Cross and the need for those souls to come to Jesus before it is too late? Are some even twisting Scriptures in an attempt to "scare hell out of people?" No scare tactics will ever keep man out of hell nor will they ever bring about what only the Holy Spirit's convicting power can accomplish. No man comes to Jesus unless the Father draws him. (John 6:44)

### **The son of perdition**

Paul uses the term in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4: "*Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it [Christ's second coming] will not be, except the falling away first, and the **man of sin** be revealed, the son of **perdition**; he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.*"

The "falling away" is the apostasy of which we have heard much and of which I have written extensively. The "man of sin" is about to be revealed, or "uncovered." This man of sin, the "son of perdition," is what we could call the "offspring of *ruin or loss*" as the Greek word is defined.

Think back to the Garden of Eden, when "death" came upon all mankind through the knowledge of good and evil. And remember Noah's day, when men were **only evil** and all flesh was destroyed with the exception of righteous Noah and his family. Fast forward to Jesus' day when He said "*And then shall many be offended* [Greek: 'stumble'], *and shall betray one another, and shall **hate one another**. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because **iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold**. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*" (Matthew 24:10-13) Then

we have Paul telling Timothy, "*But **evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.***" (2 Timothy 3:13) In God's eyes, the worst evil is that which keeps souls from coming to Jesus.

Let's get back to Paul's words to the Thessalonians. The "temple of God" was not a temple made with hands. Ever since Jesus' death and resurrection, God's new temple is in regenerated man. But evil has accelerated, as was prophesied by Jesus and Paul as seen in the last paragraph. The unregenerate pretenders have not surrendered to Jesus and are opposing Him by attempting to be their own "gods". Of course, they have convinced themselves they are "serving Him," but in their hearts they are serving "self". They are deceived, and are deceiving others. God's Spirit can only dwell in a temple that has room for Him. When we are full of self, we prevent the work God desires to do in order for us to be made into the image of His Son. We will even become detestable in His sight to the degree that the term "son of perdition" is a deserving title - all because flesh has reproduced as flesh (spiritually speaking). We will have exhausted all opportunity to surrender until suddenly it is too late.

The Apostle Peter had a strong message regarding false prophets both then and now. In these words of his, he repeatedly uses the one Greek word which was also translated "perdition." "*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in **damnable** heresies, even denying [Greek: 'rejecting'] the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift **destruction**. And many shall follow their **pernicious ways**; by reason of whom [Greek: 'through whom'] the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their **damnation** slumbereth not.*" (2 Peter 2:1-3) Notice how many different words (in bold) came from that one Greek word. If only we could hear the fervor in the voices of the Apostles who gave their all for the sake of the gospel and the Saviour they loved and served!

Today, there are countless false teachers through whom the way of truth is blasphemed by the very doctrines they put forth. We all could probably name many, but the most dangerous ones are those who are not as blatant, but who present just enough truth with a hint of error, and draw souls into "*damnable heresies.*" And this, very often, is unbeknownst to not only the hearers but the preachers also. The "just enough truth" leads them to complacency and blindness to the leaven of error. The nature of deception is stealth and is so insidious that man has no idea he is being deceived. Unless there is repentance - and soon - they will not be a part of the Body of Christ. What body will they then be a part of?

## The body of antichrist

When I asked the Lord to show me the meaning of Calvary, He led me in a study of the word "flesh". The study involved writing out every verse in the Bible that contained that word. From that study came several others, done in the same way, which showed without question the reason Jesus came to this earth and died. What I am writing here, today, is a result of those studies in the presence of the greatest Teacher - the Spirit of Truth. What a glorious time it was!

I say all that to say this: Please do not take lightly what you are reading here. If anyone were to do an in-depth study under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, they would reach the same conclusions as those presented in this article.

So, what is the "body of antichrist"? To state it simply, the corporate body of apostate "man of sin/flesh" makes up antichrist's body. Just as Christ has His Body of faithful believers who live and walk by the Spirit, antichrist has his body of disbelievers who faithfully pursue the life of self and flesh which leads to death. With the meaning of "perdition" being "*ruin or loss*" we can see where this is going.

In Romans chapter one, Paul told how, in spite of having heard the truth, man in his fleshly "wisdom" forsook God and began to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator. Doesn't that sound a lot like what we see today? Man exalts self and flesh, making gods of those who tickle their ears; all in the name of "worshipping God." Later on, Paul speaks more on flesh when he tells us that the "***mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God:***" (Romans 8:6-7a)

## The beast and his mark

Whenever we hear the words "mark" and "beast" in the same sentence, we immediately think of Revelation 13:18: "*Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding let him count the number of the beast: for it is **the number of a man**; and his number is Six hundred and sixty six.*" Like the verse says, 666 is the number of man - a mere man of flesh.

There are places in both Old and New Testaments where man is referred to as a "beast". One such verse reads, "*I said in mine heart, It [judgment] is because of the sons of men, that God may prove them, and that they may see that they themselves are but as beasts.*" (Ecclesiastes 3:18) In Second Peter and Jude we find the word again, and in both cases the context is the same. Peter was speaking of the false teachers when he said, "***But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;***" (2 Peter 2:12) Then we have Jude's words regarding the same, "*But these speak evil of those*

*things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as **brute beasts**, in those things they corrupt themselves."* (Jude 10)

In my old Bible of Gran's, the Greek words for "brute beasts" were translated "*creatures without reason.*" The false teachers of whom Peter and Jude spoke so strongly were irrational, like animals made to be taken and destroyed. This tells us that God does not look kindly upon the work of false teachers. And that is putting it mildly. The day is coming when they WILL perish in their own corruption. They have led thousands down a path to corruption and a day of reckoning is coming. The Greek word for "corruption" is defined as "*decay, that is, **ruin** (spontaneous or inflicted, literally or **figuratively**).*"

Except for the last six verses, the whole book of Jude foretells the folly of flesh in the mockers who "minister," and what the end will be for them - the wicked creatures of flesh that they are. God did say that judgment begins at His house, as Peter tells us. "*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house [Greek: 'family'] of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"* (1 Peter 4:17)

We can see the relationship between the body of antichrist and the "brute beasts" because both are entrenched in flesh, having rejected both Father and Son in their self-driven endeavors. They already bear the mark of the beast. It is evident to the Father, but those who follow them seem blind to what is taking place. This takes us back to Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, where he says, "*And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming: even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they **received not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. And for this cause **God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**"* (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12)

It is my belief that the "lawless one" of which Paul speaks is the beast that emerges as the ultimate manifestation of flesh, having given himself over to Satan. This great leader of all flesh will continue in his opposition of Messiah, until Jesus comes with the flaming fire of His jealousy to forever destroy - **FLESH!**

The destruction of flesh was prophesied in Ezekiel and Revelation. When John was shown Jesus coming as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he saw "*an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying **to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.***" (Revelation

19:17-18) This is the same message Ezekiel had prophesied, when he said, "*And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; **Speak unto the birds** of every sort, and to **every beast** of the field, **Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you**, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And **ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. And ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God.**" (Ezekiel 39:17-20)*

God's ultimate revenge came in the form of a mocking sacrifice of flesh, made for the scavengers of the air and field that feast on flesh. Now look at what follows: "*And I saw the **beast**, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. And the **beast** was taken, and with him the **false prophet** that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he **deceived them that had received the mark of the beast**, and them that worshipped his image: they twain were **cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone**. And the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and **all the birds were filled with their flesh.**" (Revelation 19:19-21)*

### **The seal of God**

Just as the apostate creatures of flesh bear the mark of the one to whom they have unwittingly pledged allegiance, God has put His own seal on those faithful believers who make up the Body of Christ. In Revelation 9:4, these words of John's are recorded: "*And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only such men as have not **the seal of God on their foreheads.***"

The word "seal" is translated from the Greek word which means "*a signet (as fencing in or **protecting from misappropriation**); by implication the stamp impressed (as a mark of privacy, or genuineness), literally or figuratively.*" "Misappropriation" is the taking for oneself to use exclusively for ill.

In Revelation 3:10, in his letter to the church at Philadelphia, I believe Jesus was speaking of "*protection from misappropriation*" when He said, "*Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*" Those who faithfully walk in the Love of God are obeying His one commandment. They are the only ones of whom Jesus has nothing but good to say. They have His seal in their foreheads and no one can take their crown. Or, as Jesus said in John 10:27-29, "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish,*

*neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."*

Both the seal of God and the mark of the beast are in the forehead, and are representative of the mind. This is one example of the symbolism that is especially prevalent in the book of Revelation, as well as the book of Daniel. Remember how Paul said that the "*mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace.*" The mind of the flesh follows after anything that is fleshly or of the "feel good" nature. This leads to eternal death. But the mind of the Spirit follows the Spirit's voice and can only lead to Life and peace.

### **The abomination that desolates**

According to the Hebrew language, the phrase "*abomination that desolates*" (Daniel 11:31) could also read "the idolatrousness that stupefies." The idolatrousness that is inherent in those who reject Jesus and choose to follow after the flesh has a stupefying effect. They become like zombies, listless and mechanical in their delusional, stupefied state. This is not the only mention of "stupefying" in the Bible. Another is the word "tares," as in Jesus' parable, which actually means "darnel" or "false grain," and darnel means "stupefied." The false grain "darnel" is prone to infestation by a fungus which makes the seeds poisonous. We can see how the "tares" of which Jesus spoke are spreading their stupefying poison; just like the idolatrousness that stupefies.

Like Daniel's account of those that "*do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits,*" the "good seeds" in Jesus' parable of the tares will come through in His power and strength. (Daniel 11:31-32; Matthew 13:24-30)

We are approaching the day of the separation of true and false, Spirit-filled and flesh, and the Body of Christ from the body of antichrist. But leading up to that day, the true will suffer persecution - not from the world, but from the religious fleshly body of antichrist. The stupefied false seeds, the sons of the evil one sown by the devil himself, will rail against the true Body of Christ with the "flatteries" of which Daniel spoke in Daniel 11:34. The apostate ones will use "flattering remarks meant to persuade" (Hebrew meaning of 'flatteries') in a grand effort to draw back into bondage those who have followed Jesus away from apostasy. The blinded apostate ones believe they are on God's side and it is their duty to "win back" the "backslidden ones."

My friends, we are in for a rough "ride." To those entrenched in flesh, the increasing manifestation of evil spirits will have the appearance of the working of God's Spirit. But it will be the *power and signs and lying wonders* from Satan. More than ever we will see the controlling spirits, the religious spirits like Jezebel, and every other evil spirit that operates in the realm of religious flesh. Like I said

in my book, *"Flesh is the door through which Satan walks. He planned it that way from the beginning."*

Our only hope is to seek the Lord more than ever, so that we will hear and recognize His voice as He "keeps us from the hour of trial" that is sifting and trying those that dwell in the earth. The trial must come in order to separate the true from the false. Like in the days of the early ekklesia, purification will come through persecution.

Even more important than our own protection, will be the testimony of Jesus that some without Christ will witness because of Christ in us. I firmly believe that our Lord will work wonders on our behalf, which will make an indisputable "statement" of HIS power, and He will draw souls to Himself. After all, the *"testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* (Revelation 19:10b)

Also remember Jude's words: *"**Keep yourselves in the love of God**, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And **on some have mercy**, who are in doubt: and **some save, snatching them out of the fire**; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment **spotted by the flesh**."* (Jude 21-23)