

## IDENTIFYING THE ANTICHRIST

Just a few weeks ago I was asked by a longtime friend how to show someone who the antichrist is, and I realized I didn't have any previous sermon or Bible study on this subject, so I thought it would be a good idea to do that today. There have been many times in the past when I briefly mentioned who it is, but it's not so easy to do when you're dealing with someone not of our faith.

However, the identification of the antichrist is something we definitely need to understand, because why? Because if we don't know who the antichrist is, we will end up being joined to the antichrist, and also not be able to warn others. In *Pamphlet 139, page 11* it says, "Those who become confused in their understanding of the Word, who fail to see the meaning of antichrist, will surely place themselves on the side of antichrist."

Pretty clear, isn't it? If we become confused about what the Bible teaches and fail to see the import of who antichrist is and what he teaches and stands for, we will end up taking his side in the great controversy. Is that possible? Even for Seventh-day Adventists? If we're confused about this topic, how can we proclaim the third angel's message, which is directly opposed to what the antichrist is proclaiming? Obviously we can't!

You see, God has put us here at this moment in time for the purpose of exposing the antichrist to the world. We should all be able to do this, but I fear that only a small percentage of those professing the truth today would be able to show, from the Scriptures, who the antichrist is, because there is no one Scripture that says antichrist is so and so. You have to go here and there in the Scriptures to be able to identify antichrist, and it's not so easy to do that. And I'll tell you something else, it involves more than Sunday sacredness. It's going to be much more difficult for Satan to convince a seventh-day Sabbath keeper that God changed the day, than it will be for him to convince them of another error, and we'll talk about what that other error is before we get done, so stay tuned for the next hour.

This morning we're going to have a little Bible study that will show conclusively who the antichrist power is and what he's all about, and we'll begin with **Daniel 7:25**.

In **Daniel 7:25**, Daniel says, "And he (**that is, the little horn mentioned in the previous verses, and we'll come back to that later**) "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they (**the saints**) shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

We'll come back to several of the other points brought out in this verse in a few minutes, but for now, how do we know that this verse is talking about the antichrist? Because it says, "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and wear out (**or persecute**) the saints of the Most High." By definition, wouldn't one who does these things be an antichrist power? You

don't need any other text to show that. You know that whoever it's talking about in this verse, has to be an antichrist power. So let us find out who it is.

In **Daniel 7** there are several identifying marks that are not found anywhere else in the Bible. This chapter gives us absolutely indisputable evidence as to the time and place where the antichrist power would arise, and that's an important point, because there are many Christians today who think that the antichrist has not even come yet! But as we'll see, he has been here for many centuries. The Protestant reformers knew who it was, but somehow today most Christians believe he will be some dark villain who will appear in the near future. So that's number one, antichrist is already here and he has been for a long, long time, and we'll see that as we go along.

There are two groups that misapply the Scriptures when studying this subject today. There are those that believe the antichrist power is still in the future, and some believe that the antichrist power appeared sometime before the time of Christ, but **Daniel 7** gives us dates and places so we don't have to guess about it. In **Daniel 7** Daniel records a vision he had about four beasts, which represent four empires, or kingdoms that were going to rule the world. Also in **Daniel 2** it tells us the same thing, that there were only four world empires that would be worldwide in authority.

Now notice what **Daniel 7:23** says, "Thus he said, **(that is, the angel that was speaking to Daniel)**, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." And according to **verses 7, 8**, which we'll read in a minute, this fourth kingdom was not to be superseded, or replaced by another earthly kingdom, but was to be divided into ten kingdoms.

We know that the fourth beast in **Daniel 7** is the same as the fourth kingdom mentioned in **Daniel 2**, which is Rome. The third beast was Greece, the second Medo-Persia, and the first was Babylon. These are facts of history that are indisputable, and there's no argument against this understanding that I'm aware of.

Now notice what it says in **verse 7**. "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns", which are the ten kingdoms of the divided up Roman Empire. Then in **verse 8** Daniel says, "I considered the horns **(the ten horns)**, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots."

Now notice the explanation of this in **verse 24**, "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them **(that would be "the little horn")**; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."

Now, this other one that would “rise after them” is the same as the little horn power described first in **Daniel 7:8**, referred to again in **verses 20 and 21**, and now referred to again in **verse 24**, and there are several things about this little horn power, or this antichrist power described for us here.

First of all, Scripture gives us a geographical place where the antichrist was to arise. He was to arise among the ten divisions of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was divided into the following ten divisions between 351 and 476 AD. Anglo Saxons (or Great Britain), the Alamanni (or Germany), the Franks (or France), the Burgundians (Southern France and the area of Switzerland.), the Visigoths (Spain), the Suevi (or Portugal), the Lombard’s (or Northern Italy), the Heruli, (which were driven out by the little horn power and destroyed in 493 AD.), the Vandals (which were in Northern Africa, they were destroyed in 534 AD and disappeared by this same power), and finally there were the Ostrogoths (which were the last to be driven out in 538 AD, and were later destroyed and disappeared.)

Daniel clearly tells us in **verse 8**, that this little horn power, or this antichrist power, was to arise among these ten divisions of Rome. So if you want to know where the antichrist power would arise, you have to look at that area of Europe where the Roman Empire was divided up into those ten kingdoms. It has to be in that geographical place, and can’t be anywhere else.

Again, the Roman Empire was divided up between 351 and 476 AD, which means that this little horn power would have to appear sometime “after” 476 AD. Do you see that? It’s called a horn, and horns were called kings in **verse 24**, and what do kings have? They have kingdoms.

This little horn, this antichrist power, was “another” one, or “another” kingdom. In other words, it was not one of the European nations. It was not France or England or Germany or any of the others, it was in addition to the ten kingdoms. It was “a little horn.” In fact, in size, it was so little that it was way smaller than any of the other ten nations of Europe. And so, it would arise as a horn, or as a kingdom, “after” the ten divisions of the Roman Empire. That’s very clear.

We read earlier that in the process of arising, the little horn would uproot three of the ten kingdoms, and I already mentioned the three that were uprooted or destroyed. They were the Heruli in 493 AD, the Vandals in 534 AD, and the Ostrogoths in 538 AD. And so, the earliest date that could possibly be given to the little horn power that would appear, or have independent authority, would be 538 AD when the last of those three kingdoms would be uprooted, or destroyed.

Now it’s true that the little horn power existed before 538 AD, but the earliest time it had independent civil authority as a kingdom, was in 538. Its rise to independent political power was between 493 and 538 AD as those three kingdoms that opposed the little horn were being uprooted. Before that, it was always subservient to another power, and that’s why the

Ostrogoths, the Vandals and the Heruli had to be driven out. The little horn power could not have independent authority as long as they were around to oppose its power and teachings.

**Daniel 7:8** also tells us that this antichrist, this little horn power, had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things. In other words, this power, this antichrist, would claim the prerogatives that belong only to the Lord. In **2 Chronicles 16:9** it says the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong, and that it is God that sees everything, and that nothing is hidden from Him. And so, the antichrist claims this type of knowledge and power, and these claims are very easy to document, because this power claims to hold on earth, the place of God Almighty. The word “antichrist” doesn’t just mean a person that is against Christ, but a power that takes the place of Christ, and this is most often the meaning as you read about this antichrist power.

**Daniel 7:20** says of this antichrist power, that in appearance, “was more stout than his fellows.” In other words, this horn became more prominent. Some people say, Oh, that was Antiochus Epiphanies, but here’s the problem with that. When it says that his appearance “was more stout (**or greater and more formidable**) than was his fellows, that means that this power was greater than the British Empire, the French Empire, the German Empire, or any of the nations of Europe, which could not possibly be a description of Antiochus Epiphanies, because he was never that powerful. And so, this puts a qualification on who the antichrist could be. This couldn’t be just anybody, and certainly not Antiochus. Besides, Antiochus lived long before Christ was here, and we’ve already determined that the antichrist came to power 538 years after Christ was here. Certainly Antiochus was antichrist, but not the one that would come in the last day spoken of in the book of Daniel. And so, the antichrist of **Daniel 7** is a power that is greater than any of the nations of Western Europe, which in the last 1,500 years of history have been among the greatest nations of the world. And so, this “more stout than his fellows” description that Daniel gives is a very qualifying statement that doesn’t fit just anybody.

There’s another qualifying statement about this antichrist power in **Daniel 7:21**, where it says he would make war with the saints, or Christ’s church, and prevail against them. Again, this would have to be from 538 AD and onward, and we’ll talk more about that in a few minutes.

Then in **verse 24** it says that this antichrist power would be different than the first ten divisions of the Roman Empire. So in what way would it be different? The difference is that this little horn would be a religious power, whereas the ten kingdoms the little horn arose out of were civil powers.

Now here’s another key point about the antichrist in **verse 25** where it says, “he shall think (**The Hebrew means “to hope”, and when you hope to do something, that is your intention**) “he shall think (**or intend**) to change times and laws.” Notice, it’s not talking about something that just kind of happens, it’s talking about deliberate, intentional changes that relate to time and law.

The words “times and laws” here can be translated in the singular, and it should be in light of what the antichrist has already done. In Hebrew the word “times” is taken from the root word specifically meaning “an appointed occasion.” And the word “laws” can be translated in the singular as well, which in Hebrew means “a royal edict”, that is, a law requiring obedience, or a “commandment.” To put it simply, this antichrist power spoken of in **verse 25** would intentionally change God’s appointed occasion, or a commandment dealing with time.

There’s only one of God’s Ten Commandments that deals with time, and that’s the seventh-day Sabbath. Has there been a power on earth that has claimed the authority to change the fourth commandment from the seventh to the first day of the week? Of course there is! The papacy makes no bones about it. They freely admit that they have done this, and the Protestant churches blindly follow its lead.

In 321 AD it was the nominal conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity that started Rome down the path of acknowledging the Christian religion instead of paganism, but it was nothing more than baptized paganism, of which Sunday worship was an integral part where the townspeople were required to rest on “the venerable day of the sun.”

Nevertheless, it took over 200 years before religion dominated in Rome as church leaders finally took control of the civil power, and that came to its culmination, as I mentioned earlier, when the Ostrogoths, the Vandals and the Heruli were uprooted by the papacy in 538 AD.

**Verse 25** goes on to say, “The saints (**or God’s people, Christ’s church**) shall be given into his hand (**into the hands of antichrist to persecute**) for a time and times and a dividing of time.” Now I know you already know this, but for the sake of those who might be listening on the Internet or to a CD someone shared with them of this sermon, I’ll briefly explain this “time and times and a dividing of time.”

You can go to Strong’s Concordance, which is basically a dictionary of the Hebrew and Greek words used in the King James Bible, and you will see that a “time” represents a year, “times” plural, would represent 2 years, and a dividing of “time”, or half of a time, represents six months. According to the Hebrew calendar when Daniel wrote his prophecy, there were 360 days to the year, not 365. So we have to calculate the days based on what Daniel understood at the time. So, 360 days (**or 1 year**) + 720 days (**or 2 years**) + 180 days (**or half a year**) = 1260 days. And here’s the other important point: in order to come to right conclusions when studying time prophecy, a day always represents a year, and there are two passages of Scripture that tell us this.

The first is in **Numbers 14:34** and the second in **Ezekiel 4:4-6**. In **Numbers 14** we have the story about the 12 Israelites that spied out the land of Canaan for 40 days, and all but Joshua and Caleb, you’ll remember, brought back an evil report, and because the congregation believed the 10 doubters instead of the two who had faith, they had to wander around in the wilderness

for 40 years, each day for a year. And just in case you think I'm making this up, let's read **Numbers 14:34**, "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise." Notice, this was a time prophecy, because it was declared before it happened, and it happened just as stated.

Now let's take a look at **Ezekiel 4**. In this chapter we have a time prophecy about the siege of Jerusalem portrayed by Ezekiel lying upon his left side for 390 days and then on his right side for 40 days. This was the length of time Israel and Judah were to be punished for their iniquity. Now let's read that in **Ezekiel 4:4-6**, "Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year."

So, whenever we have a time prophecy, a day always represents a year, and in **Deuteronomy 19:15**; **2 Corinthians 13:1** it says in the mouth of two or three witnesses a matter is established. And so, a day always represents a year. If you try to calculate time prophecies as literal days, you'll come up with the wrong answer every time.

Now, why is it important to understand the 1260 days of **Daniel 7:25** as years rather than days? Most Christians today understand the "time, times, and a half time" as 3 ½ literal years that are still future, but we've already seen that the persecution of the church by antichrist began in 538 AD, which means that 1260 years from that point would extend to the year 1798, and it's no coincidence that that is the period of the dark ages when the papacy wore out the saints of the Most High as Daniel said he would, and the reason it ended at that specific time is because the pope was taken captive by Napoleon's general on February 10, 1798. Does that mean that the papacy is the antichrist? Pretty strong evidence so far, isn't it? But **Daniel 7** is not the only place in the Scriptures that identifies the antichrist.

We haven't even come close to exhausting **Daniel 7**, but we're going to go to another portion of Scripture now that talks in detail about the antichrist power, and that's in **2 Thessalonians 2**. We know this is talking about the antichrist, because it says here that he "opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped." Pretty much the same as what Daniel said. So this is obviously an antichrist power, and it says that he will be revealed before Jesus comes, which would make him the last days antichrist.

These are very important points, because there are many people today who believe the rapture is going to come and steal the saints out of the world and then the antichrist is going to come, but that view has no Scriptural support whatever, and besides, there's no such thing as a secret rapture. The testimony of Scripture is that everyone alive is going to know when Jesus comes.

This secret rapture theory originated not that long ago in the nineteenth century by the Plymouth Brethren theologian John Nelson Darby, and his teaching has really caught on, and today it's believed by many, many Christians all over the world. Hollywood even made a movie about it called "Left Behind." So this false teaching has gone viral and has done much to influence the thinking of many people, but it's Satan's way of taking the heat off the papacy as the real antichrist so he can work through him by stealth. Behind the scenes Satan is working while the eyes of the Christian world are elsewhere.

Now let's go to the Scripture I mentioned a moment ago in **2 Thessalonians 2:1-4**, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (**the day when Christ returns**) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

So, the antichrist is to come before Christ comes, that's very clear. In fact, not only does the antichrist come before Christ comes, but he will not appear after Christ comes, which blows a big hole in the secret rapture theory, because **verse 8** plainly tells us that Jesus is going to destroy the antichrist "with the brightness of His coming." So anything the antichrist does in this world is going to be finished before Christ comes. That's another important point! Also **verse 2** says that the appearance of the antichrist will occur as a result of a great apostasy in Christendom, and that the antichrist is called "the man of sin" and the "son of perdition" who opposes all that is called God or that is worshipped.

So the reason we know this is speaking of antichrist is because he opposes all that is called God, which means he's opposed to Christ, because Christ is worshipped. In other words, the antichrist is a man, a human being, that accepts worship.

Also **Verse 4** is one of the most revealing and significant statement about the antichrist, where it says, "he sits as God, in the temple of God." Now let me ask you, where is the temple of God that the apostle Paul speaks of? In **Ephesians 2:19-22**, Paul says the temple of God is the church. And so, the antichrist is going to appear in the church. So this passage of Scripture shows us that the antichrist is going to sit as God in the Christian church, or I should say, in the professed Christian church. But then it says, in the last part of **2 Thessalonians 2:4**, that he "shows himself that he is God." In other words, he is taking the place of God on earth, that's the definition of antichrist, and as a man he accepts worship from other people.

Then in verses **6, 7** we have kind of a tough passage to understand, but let's read it and I'll try to explain as we go along. "And now ye know what withholdeth (**this means "to hold down" or to restrain. This is where the Concordance comes in handy**) "And now ye know what

withholdeth (**or restrains**) that he (**antichrist**) might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (**same Greek word as “withholdeth” in verse 6, meaning “to restrain”**) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (**or restrains**) will let (**or continue to restrain**), until he be taken out of the way.”

All this means is that the spirit of antichrist was already working in Paul’s time, but it was being restrained, it was being held down and not allowed to exercise its power like it would later on. According to **Daniel 7** the antichrist and his kingdom would not be revealed until after the fall of the Roman Empire, but Paul says the spirit of antichrist, or the spirit of lawlessness, was already at work. In other words, the antichrist power has roots that go all the way back to the time of the apostles. It was restrained back then, but its roots were there.

And then it says, it’s called “the mystery of iniquity” or the mystery of transgressing God’s law, or the mystery of lawlessness. The mystery of lawlessness is a system where people are taught to believe that they are keeping God’s law when they are actually breaking it. It’s an amazing thing, that’s why it’s called a mystery. It’s actually a big fat lie that people are fooled into believing.

So, Paul says exactly the same thing as Daniel about the antichrist power. He says it is already at work, but it is being restrained right now. But then he says that after the one who restrains is taken out of the way, the antichrist would be revealed.

Who is the one that at that time was restraining the mystery of lawlessness from exercising its power? It was the civil power of the Roman Empire. And so, the antichrist power could not be revealed at that point in history. It was restrained by the civil authority of the Roman Empire that had control of the world. So, the mystery of iniquity, the antichrist power could not be revealed back then. But Paul said, after the one who is presently restraining him is taken out of the way, then it will be revealed.

This antichrist power is called “that wicked”, or the lawless one in **2 Thessalonians 2:8**. And **verse 9** says he is going to come with deceptive signs. He’s going to come according to “the working of Satan.” He is going to come “with all power.” All power is talking about all satanic power, and when we realize that, then we can understand how important it is to be continually under the control of the Holy Spirit, otherwise we’ll be deceived. That’s why we’re told in **Revelation 13:3** that except for a very small minority, the whole world will wonder after the beast, the “little horn” or the antichrist power. The word “wondered” means “to admire.” When Satan performs his mighty works through the antichrist power, the whole world is going to think it’s pretty cool, and by and large they’ll be prepared to think this way because they’ve already been set up by all the spiritualistic and science fiction movies they’ve watched over the years, and all the fictitious books they’ve read, and all the false doctrines they’ve listened to from their church leaders.



Now let me briefly mention one more point. In **Revelation 13:18** it says the number of the beast, or the number of the antichrist power, “is the number of a man, and his number is 666.” We know that the pope’s triple tiara crown has the words “Vicarius Filii Dei written on it, don’t we? The word Vicarius means “in the place of” and Filii means “son” and Dei means “God.” This means that the antichrist is a man that claims to take the place of the Son of God on earth. Does the pope do this? Does the pope claim to be able to forgive sin? Yes! And he gives authority to his local priests to do the same. But the New Testament is clear that Jesus is the only one who can forgive sin, and for any man to claim that prerogative has to be the antichrist spoken of by Daniel and the apostle Paul. And when you calculate the Latin words “Vicarius Filii Dei” in Roman numerals, it’s no coincidence that they add up to 666.

And also, we know that the mark of the beast, or the mark of antichrist is that he, the papacy, is the one responsible for changing the day of worship from the seventh-day Sabbath to the first day of the week. They admit it and are proud of the fact. So, when you put all of this information together, the Bible points to only one antichrist power in these last days, and it can’t apply to anyone else. There’s only one power that meets the identifying marks given by inspiration, and that power is none other than the papacy.

But here’s the problem, the world at large today doesn’t believe the Bible, and the various churches are misapplying the Scriptures, but if there’s an apparition of the Virgin Mary somewhere, or some dead person is said to have come back to life, people will travel half-way around the world to see it. The world today is as superstitious as it was anciently. And when you have all these lying wonders that are going to be manifested, what do you expect is going to happen? The whole world is going to be deceived, except for those whose lives are committed to Jesus Christ; those who are converted; those who are obeying and following what the Bible teaches upon this point, and the Holy Spirit will enable them, and only them, to tell the difference between the true and the false.

In the end, the path of error and the path of truth will be so close together that without the Holy Spirit, we will not be able to tell the difference. That’s why we need to be praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit every day. We need to pray that the Holy Spirit will be in control of our mind and help us not to offend God by sinning in thought, or word, or action, because the commission of a known sin will silence the voice of the Holy Spirit and make us vulnerable to the devils attacks, and we will become so confused that we will “fail to see the meaning of antichrist, **(and)** will surely place **(our)**selves on the side of antichrist.”

Now we come to a very important passage of Scripture in **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12**. This is speaking of how the antichrist is going to fool the world, especially the religious world, including Seventh-day Adventists. It says that wicked antichrist will be used by Satan to work “with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because **(why?)** because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And

for this cause **(or because they didn't love the truth)** God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness", or pleasure in sin.

Notice, everyone who does not love the truth is going to be deceived by the antichrist; everyone! He's going to come with "a lie", better translated "the lie" according to the context, because it's a specific lie and not just any lie. And what is "the lie"? It's salvation in sin! It's the mystery of iniquity! How do we know that? We know that because those who believe "the lie" "had pleasure in unrighteousness." The word "pleasure", according to the Greek, means "to think well of", or "to approve", and **1 John 5:17** says "all unrighteousness is sin." In other words, those who have "pleasure in unrighteousness" believe that God "approves" of them, or thinks well of them, even while they are committing sin. This is "the big lie!" Salvation in sin! But the truth is, if you want to be saved, you have to overcome sin. The teaching of antichrist is that you can be saved in sin as long as you keep your sins confessed, that's what the Catholics do. But unfortunately, that's also what many Seventh-day Adventists do. But again, the truth is that we cannot be saved without overcoming sin! Yes we must confess, but we must also overcome, and that's the part antichrist doesn't want the world to understand.

In ***The Great Controversy, page 46*** it says, "The early Christians were indeed a peculiar people. Their blameless deportment and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner's peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evil-doers wherever their character and doctrines were known. Therefore they were hated by the wicked, even as Abel was hated by the ungodly Cain."

Is what you believe a terror to evil-doers? If not, then what you believe is not what the early church believed when it's teachings were pure. If you believe and proclaim Bible truth, you are looked upon as a terrorist today by those who want to live without restraint. Don't say anything to them that might expose their lifestyle as sinful and bring guilt to their conscience, because it's considered hate to insinuate that what they're doing is wrong. If your blameless deportment and unswerving faith is a continual reproof that disturbs the sinner's peace, then you know that you are right on target.

The truth is, not one of us are going to be saved in sin. Not one! If there is any sin in our mind or in our character that we have not overcome, we are not going through the pearly gates. It is just that simple. I know that's a shock to many Christians today, but it's the truth. People have heard "the lie" of antichrist for so long that when they first hear that they can't be saved in sin they can't believe it! This lie of antichrist has gone all over the world and has affected almost all Christian churches, but you know what? It's still a lie. It is "the lie" of the antichrist power. Antichrist has many other lies as well, but salvation in sin is the big one, because the devil knows that if you continue to sin until you die, or until your earthly probation closes, you will be eternally lost and have to bare your own sins, the wages of which is eternal death. So don't let

the antichrist or his agents fool you into thinking that sin is something that you can't overcome, or something God will overlook. Satan and his evil angels were cast out of heaven for committing sin, or disobeying, and God is not going to let any of us in for doing the same.

Even in God's professed remnant church, leaders and laity alike are teaching that nobody can be perfect. Yes, the vast majority of all the people in the church and in the world are going to continue in sin thinking they're saved, but they're not going to heaven unless they stop. And the thing is, the truth about this is not an obscure teaching in the Bible. We don't have time to read all the texts that clearly teach the absolute necessity of overcoming sin if we would be saved, but when you get the time you can read **John chapter 8, Romans chapters 6 and 8, Galatians chapter 5, the book of James, and Revelation chapters 2, 3, 21 and 22.** It's clearly presented there! Scripture makes it very clear, that when Jesus comes again, He is going to have a people who are without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that they should be holy and without blemish. These are the only people that are going to be save.

Maybe we should take the time to look at just one in **1 John 3:4-10**, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he **(Christ)** was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of **(who?)** the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil **(in your heart and in mine)**. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **(In other words, as long as Jesus abides in your heart, you will not sin, because Jesus and sin cannot abide in the same heart at the same time. One or the other has to go, and if you choose to let Jesus go, you are lost at that point)** In this **(that is, whether or not we sin)** the children of God are manifest **(or made known. By their fruits you shall know them)**, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." How much clearer can it get?

Listen, there was a time in my life when I was fooled by "the lie" and I thought that there was no way I could overcome the sin that so easily beset me, and it was because of the teaching of a very popular minister back in the early 1970s who was spreading "the lie" all over the denomination, and he was very good at it. But I discovered something, Jesus has all power in heaven and earth and He is willing to send the Holy Spirit to fill me with that power so I can resist the temptation to sin if I have faith to believe it. Don't let the devil convince you that there is no hope. You can stop sinning; you can perfect a character for heaven; sin can become hateful to you when you see what it did to Jesus and what it has done to the whole world, and when you hate something, it's much easier to avoid it.

Now listen carefully, because I'm going to make salvation as simple as I know how. Are you listening? It's the sin that you will not forsake that will keep you out of heaven. That's it! If you will not forsake; if you are not willing to turn away from sin, you cannot overcome, and if you don't overcome, your feet will not leave the ground when Jesus comes.

In closing I'd like to share something with you from ***Christ's Object Lessons, page 331***, because this is what helped me, and I know it will help you if you can grasp it. "Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. **(Isn't that a novel idea? We form a righteous or unrighteous character by what we chose to do or not do)** It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. **(You've probably heard that it's easy to be saved and hard to be lost; that's a lie)** Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected. Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you cannot overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and **(now listen)** and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God."

Remember what it says in **James 4:7**? "Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will **(what?)** flee from you." And if the devil flees from you, he will take his temptation with him when he leaves, thus allowing you to keep from yielding to it. That's the way it works! But if you're looking for an easy way that requires no stern battles with self, then you will die in your sins, and you'll have no one to blame but yourself. If I don't tell you the truth, then God will require your blood at my hand, and I don't want that to happen for sure.

The God that we serve is powerful, friends! If there's sin in your life that you have never been able to overcome, and if you will come to the Lord today and say, "Lord, I am willing to give up that sin right now, today," then the Lord will give you the power and the desire to give it up. That means you have the chance to be changed today! And I would plead with you not to put it off until a more convenient season, because it will never be more convenient than it is right now. Just ask Governor Felix who was looking for a more convenience season. He didn't find it and neither will we.

In ***Our High Calling, page 337*** it says, "when the Lord sees the determined effort made to retain only pure thoughts, he will attract the mind, like the magnet." Do you want that to happen in your life? God wants to do that for you, but unlike the antichrist, He never uses force. The choice is yours. Are you going to escape the lie that you can be saved in sin? If so, then it's going to take determined effort on your part, but it can happen if you submit to God in everything.

The reason people like the lie of antichrist is because it is attractive. We read in 2 Thessalonians 2:12 that there is pleasure in unrighteousness, but if you are having pleasure in unrighteousness, you're lost. None of us are going through the pearly gates with sin. There are going to be only a few people out of all the billions of earth who will say, "I believe what God says, He has promised that He can deliver me from every sin. He can take it away from me, if I'm willing to cooperate with Him." God wants to heal you, friend. I don't know what your cultivated and heredity sins and weaknesses are, or what your past or current environment is like, and I don't need to know, but you can be sure that God knows all about it and He's waiting to set you free. But one thing is certain, if you are going to be set free, you are going to have to be set free in this life, because none of us are going to heaven in chains to be set free there. If you want to be set free, bring your sin to the foot of the cross and leave it there for the Lord to deal with, because He is the sin bearer.

I remind you of what it says in *The Great Controversy, page 582*, "From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth. To deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God's law, is the object which he has steadfastly pursued."

This is the object of antichrist, and if we fail to see this meaning of antichrist as we read when we started, we will surely place ourselves on the side of antichrist. May it not be so.