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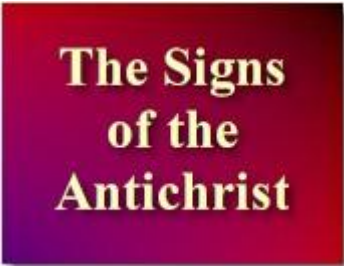
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The Signs of the Antichrist

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1976

Edited by David Sielaff, August 2023

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The Signs of the Antichrist

The one major event to occur just before the return of Christ to earth is the appearance of the Antichrist. The essential factors associated with this man are almost totally misunderstood by many Christians. Indeed, the majority may well accept the basic tenets that the Antichrist will teach; and they will think of him as Jesus Christ having returned to earth. So clever will be his subterfuge, even the very elect of God would be close to embracing his claims. If there was ever a time to realize what the signs of the Antichrist will be, it is now! This article explains.

The main activity of Satan is to practice the art of deception — and he is very active and thorough in accomplishment of his trade. The Bible reveals him as **“that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world”** (Revelation 12:9). The role of Satan is to be a liar, and he has done the job well from the very beginning of his existence (John 8:44).

The key point to realize is that few people believe they are deceived. On the contrary, many individuals actually think they are right in what they believe or do! And no one on earth is immune from being deceived or causing deception.

An example of this was the general belief of most people in the world some five or six hundred years ago that the earth was flat. The Christian people of Western Europe thought they had the Bible backing them up in their appraisal. Though the Bible does not teach such a thing (except the Bible’s allegorical language could lead one in that direction), Popes and other religious leaders were adamant in their convictions that the earth was indeed flat. But they were all wrong! They were unknowingly and even innocently deceived, and all scientific knowledge available at the time was marshalled to perpetuate their deceptive concepts! The majority of the world was deceived though they thought they were thoroughly right.

Our modern world is not immune from similar deceptions even though we are now aware the earth is a sphere. In fact, the Bible prophesies the totality of the world’s population (except an elect minority) will come to believe the greatest lie ever foisted off on mankind. This will occur at the end of the age when the Antichrist makes his appearance. The deception will center on their conviction that the Antichrist is none other than Christ Jesus returned to earth. The prefix “anti” can mean either **“against”** or **“instead of.”**

Though the Antichrist will certainly be against the true Christ and His teachings, the apostles actually intended the prefix to mean the Antichrist would appear on earth “in the place of” Christ.

He will successfully deceive the majority of people to believe he is our Savior returned from heaven, and the Bible shows he will possess most of the external credentials to cause people in the world to believe him! Satan is about to pull off (and God will allow it to happen) the greatest counterfeit scheme ever performed on mankind. It will result in the world accepting none other than Satan the Devil himself, in the guise of a human being, as the returning Christ to this earth.

We are told in the Book of Revelation (and other books of the Bible) that God will allow this to demonstrate to mankind that they should learn to be attentive to the exact words of Scripture and not be taken aback with the clever biblical teachings of men. This is why the apostle John warned people not to accept the biblical interpretations of anyone without thorough investigation — and that means anyone, including Ernest L. Martin! The truth is, there is not a person alive who will know every biblical truth in all its details. Even those of us who strive to teach only the truth, and nothing but the truth, still find our human limitations prevent us from knowing it all.

As we endeavor to grow in the grace and knowledge of God (2 Peter 3:18) we have to accept or to give up various doctrines from time to time in order to progress in Christian understanding. If the fruits of the Holy Spirit are actively our chief concern (Galatians 5:22–23) there is a reasonable chance our doctrines are closer to the truth than those who have little desire to stop the fruits of the flesh (Galatians 5:19–21). Even in this, all of us must be careful because Paul said we **“see through a glass darkly.”** At the present time we only **“know in part”** (1 Corinthians 13:12).

When all those researching into the meaning of the biblical revelation admit none of us knows it all, and warns people of that fact, then the influence to express an antichristian attitude can be minimized. But beware when people or organizations say they represent the “true and only Church of God.” One of the chief attributes of the Antichrist will be his dogmatism in his interpretations of the Bible in a host of ways to bring about his subterfuge in deceiving the world into believing he is Christ returned to this earth.

There are ten primary signs revealed by the Bible which can help to identify the Antichrist when he arrives. But one must be careful because Christ told His own apostles the deception will be so clever that even the very elect would be within an ace of accepting his credentials as legitimate (Matthew 24:24–26).

The Ten Major Signs

The Antichrist will attempt to fulfill all the prophetic events which the Bible says will occur when the true Christ returns to earth. He will also possess some special characteristics which the books of Daniel and Revelation describe at length — characteristics which will resemble the early Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes and other deeds associated with a unique individual named **“the Beast.”** It is a combination of these factors which must be considered if one wishes to have a complete picture of the Antichrist, the Man of Sin. In this article we will only concentrate on the essential elements which make him appear as the true Christ while in fact he will be fully inspired by Satan the Devil.

First notice ten signs or credentials our Savior will show when He returns to earth. The Antichrist will try to duplicate each of them.

1. Christ will demonstrate He is a descendant of King David to rule the world as described in Psalm 2.
2. Christ will be preceded by an “Elijah” to prepare the way for His advent (Malachi 4:5–6).
3. He will appear in a glorious return but in a fleshly body just as He had when He ascended to heaven. He will come back in the exact manner in which He left from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:11). He will not come back secretly.

Every eye shall see Him, by both the converted and unconverted (Revelation 1:7). His feet will touch the Mount of Olives after causing rebellion to cease on earth, He will gather fleshly humans before Him to be judged and they will see Him (Matthew 25:31–32). He will not be in a Spirit body (Luke 24:39). People will see wounds in His hands (John 20:27).

If He was in a spirit body, however, He would not be able to be seen by human beings (John 3:8) and they would not be able to stand before Him without a special supernatural ability provided by God (Exodus 33:20–23; Revelation 1:17). In other words, Christ will appear in a type of terrestrial body (though a fully glorified one) that the apostle Paul talked about in 1 Corinthians 15:35–42.

4. Christ will return in the clouds of heaven accompanied by His saints, His holy ones who are the angels (1 Thessalonians 3:13 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7).
5. He will make Jerusalem the capital of His government and Israelites will, under Him, control the entirety of the world (Isaiah chapters 11 and 12).
6. His reign will be established with miracles and wonders (Psalm 69).
7. He will gather the ten “lost tribes” back to Israel and govern them along with Judah and her tribes (Ezekiel chapter 37).
8. He will restore the Mosaic law in the land of Palestine and all the holydays of Moses (the weekly Sabbath and annual holydays, Isaiah 66:22–23).
9. Christ will make the earth a wonderful place to live — He will be very wise and overcome the woes with which mankind has been afflicted (Isaiah chapters 11 and 12). Many diseases of the earth will be cured (Revelation 22:2).
10. There will be universal peace among the nations throughout the world (Psalms 96 and 98).

The above ten signs and credentials associated with the true Christ are important, and they are ones that Christians today and throughout the centuries have been wanting Christ to fulfill. But strange as it may seem, the Antichrist will perform all of the above ten factors (or he will seem to accomplish them). This is why the elect ones of God must be very careful when it comes to identifying the True Christ. God has already told us He will send the world strong delusion and the majority will believe this greatest of all lies (2 Thessalonians 2:9–11). And the Bible says Satan will be successful in making the world accept his deception!

There are **two phases** to the career of the Antichrist.

The First Phase Of The Antichrist Deception

The **FIRST PHASE** is a 3½ year period while he is in the role of the seventh king mentioned in Revelation 17:10. But he appears to be killed by a “**sword wound**” at the end of the 3½ year period (Revelation 13:14). During this time, the two witnesses will be prophesying (Revelation 11:1–12), and the Antichrist will no doubt claim these two witnesses of God are nothing less than the prophesied “Beast and False Prophet.”

He will then be “killed” by the sword (or apparently so) and receive cut wounds on his body. At this time, Satan and his angels will be thrown out of heaven (Revelation 12:7–9).¹ Since Satan appears as a glorious righteous angel (and also the evil spirits can mimic the same “**righteousness.**” 2 Corinthians 11:14, 19), this return to earth will look to most humans as nothing less than the expected “Second Advent” of Christ.

It will actually be the coming of Satan and his angels, not the true Christ and His angelic hosts! At that moment, the Beast (who was the seventh king of Revelation chapter 17) will then become the Antichrist (the eighth king). This man (who apparently died of a sword wound) will emerge from his “death” existence and ascend out of the watery abyss (Revelation 13:1) which is the bottomless pit of the underworld (Revelation 9:1–2). The man will then be fully energized by the authority of Satan the Devil “**with all power and signs and lying wonders**” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). He may even become possessed by Satan the Devil himself as was Judas when he betrayed Christ (Luke 22:3).

¹ The context of Revelation 12:7–9 seems to occur immediately after the birth of Jesus. See “[Dr. Ernest Martin's Unsolved Wonder.](#)” DWS

He will then subdue all people on earth and then introduce his false type of millennial existence which counterfeits the prophesied reign of the true Christ (Revelation 13:7) and then all people (except a remnant of the saints of God) will worship him as God — as the divine Christ returned to earth (Revelation 13:8 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4). His “millennial” type of peace on earth will continue for another 3½ years (Revelation 13:5), at the end of which the real Savior will return from heaven with His angels and put an end to him, the false prophet, and imprison Satan the Devil for a thousand years (Revelation 19:11–21 and 20:1–3).

The central plan of Satan is to get people to believe the two witnesses who are ordained of God to perform a work (Revelation chapter 11) are the prophesied “Beast and False Prophet,” while the actual “Beast and False Prophet” of Revelation chapter 13 are palmed off on the world as the “true Christ and the Elijah to come.”

It will be a clever deception, and only the very elect will discern these machinations of Satan.

The Signs Of The Antichrist

Since the Antichrist will endeavor to mimic in all details the credentials of the true Christ, it will be necessary for him to claim a Davidic ancestry while on earth — both in his seventh-king stage and in his eighth-Antichrist phase. This means he could not be of Oriental, Negroid, or White European stock! The east Indians and the Arabs would be out of the question. Indeed, he would almost have to be from an ethnic group of people who could legitimately claim a Davidic connection of some kind.

Of course, the Antichrist could present false credentials of his Davidic ancestry which would deceive the world, but such subterfuge could hardly be sustained by the clear differences in the racial characteristics of most people on earth.

Jewish people in particular would not think of accepting someone as a Messiah unless the Davidic association could be maintained. And they would be right. One reason the start of the Gospel of Matthew reveals important genealogical connections of Jesus with David is because it is the first sign any self-respecting Jew of the 1st century (and even today) would accept.

Because the Antichrist will, in a political sense, resemble in some way the former Antiochus Epiphanes (Daniel 11:21–45), he will no doubt emerge to prominence in the political world from the region north of Palestine (Lebanon, Syria, Eastern Turkey, or Iraq). He will, however, not be Arabic or Turkish in ancestry because no Davidic connection could be imagined in such a case.

The Antichrist will finally gather around him ten nations in the Middle East (who are identified in Psalm 83 and Revelation 17:12) but which he will probably and erroneously identify with the ten tribes of Israel “regathered” into the areas formerly controlled by King David and King Solomon.

He will certainly not be someone of ethnic European extraction, say a German or a Frenchman, controlling the ten Common Market countries of Europe [now of course the expanded European Union *DWS*]. In fact, the 10 nations associated with the Antichrist will geographically be positioned around the State of Israel in the Middle East and this is made clear in the prophecy of Psalm 83 which has not yet been fulfilled.

The Appearance Of The False Prophet

The Antichrist will associate himself with a False Prophet (Revelation 13:11–14) which he will likely try to get the world to accept as the prophesied “Elijah to come” (Malachi 4:4–6). In effect, the Antichrist will endeavor to duplicate all the ten major signs that the true Christ (our Savior from heaven) will actually do when He returns to earth! And, for 3½ years, he will pull off his counterfeit “kingdom of god” on earth! God will allow this to happen in order to teach the world and His people that only the ways of the true Christ are the proper ones to follow.²

The world must first experience the evil of this false Satanic civilization in order to appreciate the true government of Christ. One must realize the fact that on the surface Satan’s system of rule and that of the

² See Dr. Martin’s articles “[How to Identify False Prophets](#)” and “[The Elijah to Come.](#)” *DWS*

Antichrist will look very good to most people in the world. They will lament when they see it crumbling to the ground (Revelation 18:4–20). But the true Kingdom of God on earth will be infinitely better and it will be based on a proper righteousness and rulership with Christ Jesus fully in charge of world affairs for the happiness and glory of all humans on earth.

How To Identify The Antichrist

Foremost above all other signs is the biblical teaching that the Antichrist (who seems to have all the credentials of the true Christ) must **first** arrive **before** our Savior will return to earth at His second advent. This means that the **first** world ruler who established his reign from Jerusalem (even sitting in the Temple of God calling himself God) is **not** the true Christ!

Even if some type of glorious “second coming” appears with flaming fire, one should not be deceived by it. Recall that even though the true Christ will come **“in flaming fire”** (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8), the False Prophet who aids the Antichrist will **also** bring down fire out of heaven (Revelation 13:13). Satan and his angels will also come to earth in a glorious fashion (2 Corinthians 11:14). The majority of people on earth will no doubt misconstrue his arrival as the actual Second Advent of Christ with His angels.

One must be careful when this time comes. It simply means that the **first** apparent arrival of the “Christ” will be **false**, not the true advent of Christ! Remember, the deception will be so cleverly done that even **“the very elect”** would be close to believing if they did not know better (Matthew 24:24).

There are many people today, if they saw a group of glorious spirit beings come out of heaven to earth and establish the Mosaic Sabbaths and Holydays (and all the other things Christ is prophesied to perform for Israel when He returns), they would no doubt run to this world ruler as the true Christ! Such people will be the very ones to whom God will send great delusion, so they should believe the lie (2 Thessalonians 2:9–11).

The Second Phase Of The Antichrist Deception

The **SECOND PHASE** which can identify the Antichrist from the true Christ is the manner in which he will rule people. Though the true Christ is coming with a rod of iron at first to exercise judgments on the rebellious nations of the world (Revelation 12:5), Christ will eventually, and very soon after His arrival from heaven, begin the type of rulership which Christ Jesus demonstrated to His disciples not long before His crucifixion.

Christ gave the rules of proper sovereignty when He said He or His disciples should not govern as do the kings of the Gentiles (Luke 22:24–30), but that the king in the Kingdom of God (and all others associated with Him) should **serve** the less fortunate or less esteemed! In other words, the true Christ is coming to earth to show love and service to people, and to save them from their miseries and pain.

The false Christ, however, will rule like the kings of the Gentiles, with a rod of iron at all times — at least he will be that way to those who do not submit to his absolute monarchical rule! Many church denominations today have a type of hierarchical leadership structure where there is strict governmental rule from the top down! Most will teach this is the exact type of government to exist on the earth for a thousand years under the true Christ. In no way is this true! Christ will certainly rule, and He will rule absolutely and with authority, but His rule will be the kind He performed in front of His disciples in Luke 22:24–30. Christ told them:

“... and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

• **Luke 22:29–30**

But what kind of rulership with Christ and His apostles then have?

“He [Jesus] said unto them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that does serve.’”

• **Luke 22:25–26**

But what kind of rule will Christ and His apostles put into action during His millennial rule? This is very different from “tomorrow’s world” imagined by many church leaders today. In fact, many believe the way the Antichrist will exercise his rule among men is the proper way to rule human beings — a strict and dogmatic authority from the top down! Nothing could be farther from the truth in regard to the true rule of Christ when He returns to earth. His rule is one of service, not one of strict outward and fleshly obedience. People will truly do as He says, and they will want to perform His will, but their obedience will be evident because of the wonderful manner in which Christ will be ruling the world. They will see His rule as one of real service and love to mankind!

Strict Doctrinal Obedience

The Antichrist will demand a strict doctrinal adherence to his religious teaching. The fact that there will be a mark on the hand and forehead of all people (or else they will not be able to buy or sell) is a sure sign no doctrinal or political differences will be allowed. This is how it is in many church denominations today. While it is a wonderful thing when all people believe the same doctrines or near a general uniformity of belief, coercing such a thing can become the means to make slaves out of people if doctrinal conformity is demanded of all.

The true Christ, however, will not demand such strict outward or inward “marks” on the people He loves. All He will want is for the people to love Him with genuine love and devotion springing from the inward person and not an outward and superficial conformity to ritualistic dogma! Remember, there were doctrinal differences the apostles had even with one another as they tried to understand the true teachings of Christ (e.g., Galatians 2:11–14), but that did not cause them to cease loving one another.

Not one of us is capable of knowing all the truth on any subject of the Bible. Even with the Holy Spirit of God with us we are still plagued with the limitations of the flesh and with the false influences subjected upon us by our environmental upbringing and present surroundings. This is why the apostle Paul acknowledged that all of us, including even the early apostles:

“... see through a glass darkly; but THEN face to face: now I know in part; but THEN shall I know even as also I am known. And now [for the present] abide faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love.”

• 1 Corinthians 13:12–13

The real Christian believer is far more interested in having the fruits of the Holy Spirit in his or her life (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance) than to have a so-called strict doctrinal conformity which the apostle Paul knew was unattainable in our human flesh. Even Christ did not rebuke a person who was using Christ’s authority to do a work of his own, and He instructed His apostles not to lord it over others who did not follow them (Mark 9:38–40).

This is good advice for all of us who live at the end of the age. Since Christ Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever [**“for the eons,”** Hebrews 13:8], it is better we do not insist or demand a doctrinal conformity to our own present beliefs. After all, if one is growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ as we are commanded to do (2 Peter 3:18), then even we ourselves may accept some different beliefs in a few weeks, months, or years than what we hold at present. What we must never give up, however, is our trust and faith in Christ Jesus and our sincere desire to see the fruits of the Holy Spirit actively being seen in our lives. Not once did the apostle Paul say that a fruit of the Holy Spirit was doctrinal conformity among all Christian believers.

The Antichrist and the system he will maintain in his world government, will demand doctrinal and political obedience in every sphere of life. It will result in the whole world becoming slaves to him. There will be no democratic freedom allowed. People will not be able to think for themselves. People will be under such a strict religious system that will make those of ancient Judaism and the Christianity of the Middle Ages pale into insignificance. If doctrinal unanimity (outside the basic belief in Jesus Christ) is what people think is necessary for Christian fellowship, then that requirement is the first step towards a slavery of the human soul and the first rung of the ladder in the development of the Antichrist system of rule.

As for me, I want all to realize that Ernest L. Martin does not (nor does anyone at [ASK]), require any people associated with us to believe any doctrine to fellowship with us. We do feel, however, that a full belief, trust, and love for Christ Jesus (and a desire to walk in the fruits of the Holy Spirit) are prime duties for one to be called a Christian. Even here, on the other hand, it is not our authority to correct anyone for whatever belief he or she may hold. God is the judge, not [ASK]! All we want is for fellowship to be in Jesus Christ!

And so it will be, when our Savior returns from heaven. The true Christ will do things just the opposite from what most people imagine a ruler should do today. After he puts down all rebellion with a rod of iron to fulfill prophecy and the will of His Father, He will then begin to rule the world in the manner he did with His apostles. His rule was expressed through a service, a loyalty, a friendship, and a love for His servants and all mankind (Luke 22:24–30). This is the major sign of the true Christ, and one which the Antichrist will not be willing to put into action for any length of time.

If all of us now, in spite of our special and even in some cases contradictory doctrinal beliefs, will put into firm action the same attitude of rule (the rule of service to mankind), we can always be **“in Christ”** (the true Christ) and we will recognize the false Christ when he arrives.

One final thing must be said about identifying the true Christ when he comes to earth. The apostle John made it a major sign: the true Christ was not only **“having come in the flesh”** during his career on earth (1 John 4:2), but He is also **“coming in flesh”** (2 John 7) when He returns at the Second Advent. (Though the present tense is used in 2 John 7, it is used by John in the same manner as he did when he referred to the Antichrist as one who **“is coming”** (1 John 4:3) when the event was yet a future occasion.)

These references by the apostle John are very important in regard to identifying the real Christ and also the Antichrist.

- John said it is a false teaching to say and to believe Christ was not in flesh when He taught on earth, when He was in the tomb for three days, and when He appeared to his disciples for 40 days after His resurrection from the dead.
- John also said it was wrong to say (and believe) Christ is not coming in flesh at the time of His Second Advent. Many people today teach that Christ will make a secret appearance (not in flesh) to rescue His saints from the world, but later He will come in power and visible glory with a spirit body to judge the world! In no way is this true, if I am reading the Bible correctly — and I am!

The truth is, Satan the Devil will come in a glorified spirit body (2 Corinthians 11:14) with his angels who are also spirits (Hebrews 1:7). There will be some bright demonstrations of light (flashing brilliances) associated with this Satanic display from heaven, and the world will believe it is none other than the glorified spirit body of Christ and His righteous angels. But this will be a great deception. Christ Jesus is coming back to earth **“in flesh”** (just like He left the earth — Acts 1:11).

The description of Christ’s coming in Revelation 19:11–16 is allegorical because Christ will not actually have a real two-edged sword protruding from His mouth. He will be coming to earth in glory, but in His flesh — in a terrestrial type of body that Paul spoke of (1 Corinthians 15:40–42). And though Paul said **“flaming fire”** will be associated with the Second Advent (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8), it is really the accompanying ANGELS who are surrounded with flames (this reference is an allusion to Psalm 104:4 and quoted in Hebrews 1:7). Christ Himself is coming back to the Mount of Olives just like He left from the Mount of Olives. He went up in flesh and He will return in flesh. Satan and his angels come in spirit to deceive the world. Christ, however, **“is coming in flesh.”**

Ernest L. Martin, 1976
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