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## **Falling Away to the Antichrist!**

***By David Wilkerson***

June 26, 1995 The apostle Paul speaks of two frightful things that will strike the church just prior to Jesus' return. Indeed, the Lord will not come back until these two awful things happen. And I want to show you that both things are taking place right now - before our very eyes!

First, Paul tells us that in the last days there will be a great falling away. And second, he warns that an evil spirit of antichrist will overtake many believers who are turning aside!

Of course, the church has been preaching and teaching for years about the coming Antichrist. We have been expecting the appearance of the Man of Sin, the son of perdition. Some speculate that he will be revealed in our time - that, in fact, he already has been born and is living somewhere on the earth.

Is there such a man? Yes, I believe there is - and he is totally possessed of Satan. Yet when he appears, he will be well-received. He will demand the devotion of all mankind - setting himself up as God before the world!

The only reason the Antichrist hasn't been revealed yet is because his time hasn't come. But one day the Holy Spirit will lift His restraining hand, and the Man of Sin will be revealed in full power. The Bible assures us, however, that when this evil man's time is finished, he will be consumed by God:

...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

There Is an Antichrist - And There Is Also A Spirit Of Antichrist! We have a Savior who exists right now in glory as a man. He is a living person - with flesh, bone, hair, eyes - even though He is God. And though we are here on earth, His Spirit dwells within us:

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

Yet, there is another Christ-spirit at work in the world - the antichrist spirit. Just as surely as Christ has given us His Spirit, there is an antichrist spirit possessing many apostate Christians. And that spirit is at work in the world - preparing hearts for the coming of the Man of Sin!

"...this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:3).

John is saying here, "You've heard about the coming of the Antichrist. It has been preached and taught, and you expect his arrival. But, beloved, wake up - because the spirit of antichrist is already at work!"

You must understand - the Antichrist is not going to suddenly appear on the scene and overwhelm humankind. Rather, his spirit is mysteriously at work now, setting up his kingdom in cold, compromising hearts. And when the Man of Sin finally appears, he will be publicly revealed to a world that is already prepared for him - to hearts his spirit already possesses!

Right now we see a growing antichrist sentiment and conduct. But soon this will turn into a flowing

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stream, and, eventually, a vast ocean. And when the Antichrist finally appears, even many former Christians will welcome him - because their hearts will be of a kindred spirit!

Paul warned of this. He said that in the last days false prophets would infiltrate the church, preaching another gospel and another Jesus. Many such false prophets have already appeared, preaching the gospel of the Antichrist:

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

The antichrist spirit is invading the hearts of many apostate Christians even now. They are being absolutely possessed of evil. "But how?" you ask. "Why would certain apostate Christians ever turn to the Antichrist?"

It is because they are like-minded with him! John writes:

"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 pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world...."

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2:15-18).

John is warning us that those who still love the things of this world have opened themselves to the spirit of antichrist. He's saying, "You know these are the last days - because so many are full of the covetous antichrist spirit!"

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (verse 22).

The apostle adds, "If you have not come under the total Lordship of Jesus - if you do not acknowledge Him in all your ways - then you have opened yourself up to this spirit of evil!"

Beloved, if you are serving Jesus only 50 percent - or even 90 percent - then you are denying His full salvation. You aren't serving Him with all your heart, mind, soul and body. And you have opened up an inroad for the antichrist spirit to come in!

It's not enough to say, "I believe Jesus was God in flesh." Rather, we must say, "Jesus, You are God in flesh in me. You have all power and authority over lust and sin. And I yield to You completely!"

Those Who Are Righteous - Who Worship God in Spirit and in Truth - Are Prime Targets of the Antichrist!"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped..." (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

The spirit of antichrist is opposed to all who walk closely with God. He goes after true worshipers - because he wants their worship for himself!

Satan wants nothing more than to destroy pure worship. He wants to rob God of all praise! And if you who walk in intimacy with Jesus, the antichrist spirit will come against you with everything he has. He

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will attack you with fear, doubt, lust - anything to give him an inroad to hinder your worship.

Yet his spirit of lawlessness is being restrained by the Holy Ghost:

"And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time" (verse 6).

It is the power of God's Spirit in His church - that is, in you and me - that holds back Satan's anarchy. Indeed, if God were to lift His Spirit from on-fire churches and godly believers, our nation would be a raging hell.

Yet careless, lazy Christians - those who have never forsaken their sin, who are still engrossed in the things of the world - will not be able to stand in these last days. They will be overtaken by evil!

The apostle Peter writes:

"These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.... For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Peter 2:17, 20-22).

The people whom Peter describes here claimed to be saved. They once had escaped the pollutions of the world, delivered by the power of God. They had known the way of righteousness. And yet they became entangled again in sin. They were overcome by the spirit of antichrist!

Peter couldn't have been speaking of nonbelievers here. After all, the unsaved have no faith to fall away from. Rather, those who fall have something to fall away from. Obviously, Peter is talking about apostate Christians.

Yet such halfhearted believers do more than fall away from the Lord. They also fall into something - into the hands of the antichrist spirit! Peter says such people have been "...overcome..." (verse 21).

The apostle Paul makes an astounding statement. He says that even now the antichrist spirit has taken his place in the temple:

"...so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Beloved, it's time to stop looking to Jerusalem - to the rebuilding of the temple - because the spirit of antichrist is already ascending his throne!

"What?" you ask. "What is this temple where the antichrist spirit now sits, showing his power and reign?"

It is the temple of people's hearts!

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"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (6:19).

"...for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

Yes, we are God's temple. But for some, another spirit has invaded that temple. The Spirit of God is gone - and lust, pride, covetousness and slander all reign supreme. There is no longer anything pure, holy or divine. A mysterious spirit of lawlessness is in control!

How could such a terrible, frightful thing happen? At one time the living God possessed this temple, ruling and reigning. He was once enthroned here.

Beloved, this happens because so many Christians have grown careless. They no longer walk in righteousness or holiness. And they end up giving an inroad to the spirit of antichrist. Now he sits in the temple of their heart - showing himself to be absolutely in control!

There Will Always Be a Christ on the Throne of Every Heart - Either Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, or the Antichrist! Every person reading this message has a Christ on the throne of his or her heart - either the Spirit of Christ, or the spirit of antichrist.

I am totally convinced that the antichrist spirit's most effective means of preparing hearts are cable TV and filthy movies. He knows that the eye is the gateway to the heart. And he marches straight through the corrupted, jaded eye of a Christian and takes over the throne of his heart!

This is why the antichrist spirit has taken control of the secular media - TV networks, movie production, Broadway theater, the press. Who but the antichrist spirit could so bias the media that abortion is now considered a right rather than a sin? Who but this spirit could justify euthanasia, the killing off of the elderly or infirm?

Who but the spirit of antichrist could mock everything that is sacred and holy, through wicked movies and vile TV programs? I believe the antichrist spirit is actually producing the programs on MTV and the Fox Network. From what I read of their shows, it's all absolute filth. Who but the antichrist spirit could be responsible for it?

The spirit of lawlessness is growing bolder and bolder, and our society is on the brink of becoming a raging hell. The antichrist spirit now pervades our schools, our courts, our streets, our businesses, even our homes. And, sadly, this evil is rapidly moving into the church.

I believe the spirit of antichrist is establishing churches all over the United States. This spirit is the motivating force behind "outsider friendly" churches. Who but the antichrist spirit would call for the ungodly to set the spiritual agenda - sending church founders door to door, surveying people: "What would you prefer church to be like? We want to tailor it so that you'll come."

These megachurches are being built on skits and dramas, because people don't want to hear reproof. They want no conviction - so they hear a gospel that is almost totally devoid of repentance,

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judgment, the Cross. They are told all about God's grace and mercy, how to cope with problems - but nothing of God's judgment and hell. They're being lulled to sleep in their sinful lifestyle.

I ask you: What would happen if I went into the streets, rounded up all the kids who were skipping school, and asked them, "What kind of school would you like? I'll build one that you'll enjoy, just so you'll want to come."

Those kids would answer: "We want a school that lasts only three days a week - and just two hours a day! We want no algebra, no calculus and no science. And we want lunch from noon to two, with nothing but pizza and snacks. There won't be any lectures, rules or grades. And we'll be able to come and go as we please."

If I followed through on that, I would have the biggest school in New York, with every dropout in sight. But what would happen to those kids ten years down the road, without any real preparation for living?

That's what preachers in "outsider friendly" churches should be asking themselves! What will they do when they stand before God's holy throne and watch helplessly as, one by one, many of their sheep are condemned because they were never confronted about their sins? Their people never heard a word of reproof that would lead them to true righteousness. There was no convicting message to shake people out of their sins and to prepare them to face the judgment seat of Christ.

This is exactly what the Bible warns of - churches with forms of godliness, but without power. I ask you: Who brought the music of the world into the church? Who turned weekly prayer meetings into "entertainment night" at the church? Who made Christians more concerned whether their team wins the Super Bowl than whether lost, dying people are saved? The spirit of antichrist is telling Christians they can drink from two cups - the Lord's cup, and the cup of demons!

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Corinthians 10:20-21).

You may be thinking, "This is really scary. How does a Christian get to the point of being overcome by the antichrist spirit?"

There are two causes by which the spirit of antichrist can overcome a Christian:

The First Cause by Which The Antichrist Spirit Can Take Over an Apostate Believer Is a Loss of Love For the Truth."...they received not the love of the truth..." (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

The spirit of antichrist moves in when God's truth is no longer loved or appropriated:

"...all might be damned who believed not the truth..." (verse 12).

The prophet Jeremiah wrote:

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth;

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and I will pardon it.

"And though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear it falsely. O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return" (Jeremiah 5:1-3).

This passage is not speaking of heathen, but of Israel, God's people. God is saying to Jeremiah, "Go find me just one person who has a heart for the truth - anyone - and I'll pardon him. But you won't find one, Jeremiah! These people say they love Me, but they don't receive My correction. They don't grieve when I reprove them. They no longer tremble at My Word!"

You may think, "I'm glad I'm not like Israel. I love God's Word. I haven't lost my love for truth." Yet I urge you to test yourself! Let me give you three ways to determine whether you have the love of truth in your heart:

1. The first sign of a loss of love for the truth is when you forsake assembling with other believers.

If it's a task for you to make it to church, then you've lost your love for God's truth:

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

When you no longer look forward to being in God's house with His people - when the preaching seems boring and worship no longer matters - you have opened yourself up to the spirit of antichrist. And the Lord admonishes you: "The closer you get to My coming, the more perilous the times will be. And the more important it is that you gather with My people!"

Yet something tragic is happening all across America and Canada. Pastors are calling our ministry and telling us, "We have to shut down our midweek service because so few show up. We've already had to stop holding Sunday night meetings, because people won't come unless we show a movie or put on a concert. And people don't want to come on Sunday mornings anymore if they think the service will last more than an hour."

Where are God's children if they aren't in the Lord's house? They are at restaurants, parties, socials, sporting events. Most of all, they are parked in front of their TVs - watching programs of ever-increasing evil!

2. A second sign of a loss of love for the truth is when reproofing messages make you think of someone else's sin and not your own.

Whenever you hear a prophetic sermon, do you sit smugly by, thinking, "Wow, does that ever describe Brother So-and-so. Thank God, he's finally being reached. Lord, pour it on!"

I ask you - how much, if any, of this newsletter message are you applying to yourself? How much stirring and conviction are going on in your heart? Are you praying, "God, turn Your Word on my heart"?

I urge you to heed David's words:

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"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

3. A third sign of loss of love for the truth is when reproof angers you rather than humbles you.

God says a hatred of reproof reveals a forsaking of the path of holiness:

"Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die" (Proverbs 15:10).

Perhaps you often walk away from a reproving sermon, saying, "That word was just too hard. And that preacher is just too angry!" Beloved, any godly shepherd will preach with holy anger. That's because he is angry at the devil, angry at the antichrist spirit - angry at anything that draws your soul away from true worship of the Father!

The Second Cause by Which the Antichrist Spirit Can Take Over a Compromised Christian Is The Love of Pleasure. "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12).

Paul is speaking here of "pleasure madness." Yet he is not talking about the jet set, the wild crowd, gamblers, prostitutes, drug addicts. No - the last-day pleasure-seekers referred to are found inside the church! Paul warns:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

"Blasphemers in God's house?" you ask. "Truce-breakers? False accusers? Traitors? Surely not!"

Oh, yes - absolutely! When Paul uses the phrase, "...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God...", he is intimating that these people have a measure of love for God. But that love is overcome and polluted by a love for the pleasures of the world. Paul is talking about those who pursue the pleasures of unrighteousness!

Beloved, you can pluck down five dollars for a movie if you want, and sit through two hours of violence, bloodshed and blasphemy in which God's name is freely taken in vain. But be warned: You will be drinking from the cup of devils - fellowshiping with demons! You see, when you pay for that kind of thing, you show your allegiance to the antichrist spirit who rules the media. God calls it a sacrifice to demons:

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils" (1 Corinthians 10:20).

Worst of all, you are inviting the antichrist spirit into your heart. And if you keep drinking from the cup of devils - if you keep letting that filthy antichrist spirit seep into your soul - it won't be long before nothing bothers or convicts you.

A Holy Remnant Will Love the Truth! Paul gives thanks to God for a holy people who remain steadfast in perilous times. This holy remnant will rise up against the spirit of antichrist and stand strong. They

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will never be overcome. On the contrary - they will overcome the world, the flesh and the wicked one!

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" (2 Thessalonians 2:13-17).

This holy remnant loves the truth. They aren't afraid to be reproved. So they examine themselves in light of God's Word, letting it pierce them to the very marrow - and God is able to sanctify their mind and spirit.

Beloved, if you keep your heart open to the truth - if you continue to love God's Word - the Lord will establish you. And when the evil spirit of this world comes in like a flood, Satan will be unable to make any inroad to your heart.

"They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity" (Psalm 125:1-3).

The Antichrist spirit has a rod, signifying authority. But his power and reign will not be over you. On the contrary - you will overcome him!

"I have written unto you...because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14).

"...and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Let the spirit of antichrist come. You won't be moved, because you'll be firmly established on the truth of God's Word. You'll be found in God's house, worshiping from a pure heart. And your faith will overcome all that the enemy brings against you - because Jesus sits enthroned in the temple of your heart.

I want to give you a great defense against the antichrist spirit. It's found in Psalm 139:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

Hallelujah!

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