

Who is the Antichrist?

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This is perhaps one of the most popular speculative questions in all of “Christendom?” And if someone is asking this question with this exact wording, it actually shows a misunderstanding of the subject. The reason for that is this — the Bible does NOT speak of one (singular) antichrist. Rather, it speaks of many. Furthermore, the term “antichrist” is more descriptive of an attitude, or mindset, of individuals rather than a specific Entity (or Entities).

This word “antichrist” appears four times in the Bible — 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 1:7. The plural term “antichrists” appears once (1 John 2:18), which helps us understand what the concept of antichrist is. Let us examine each of these verses, and let us not put words in the apostle John’s mouth, speculating that some arch evil Being will come to kickstart the end of the world. Premillennialism teaches that, but you won’t find this taught in the Bible.

“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 2:18). You might be thinking, “Wait a minute. I thought you just said that the antichrist would not signal the end of time? Isn’t that what this verse says?” But look closer. John is not saying that one (singular) arch evil Antichrist (capital “a”) would enter into the world, wreak havoc upon it, and then the end would come. John is saying that IT ALREADY WAS the last time in the first century when he was writing! They were aware of the concept of antichrist, and it appears that they too were thinking of a singular Antichrist, but John says that “there are **MANY** antichrists” (emphasis mine throughout). John says that because there are many antichrists, this assures us that we are living in the last time.

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22). This gives us a very basic, easy-to-understand definition of the term “antichrist” — “he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ” and he “that denieth the Father and the Son.” Essentially, ANYBODY who lives his life contrary to the will of Christ IS antichrist! Many people (e.g. atheists) deny Christ’s deity by refusing to believe in Him, but countless more people deny Christ by living their lives in contrast to His will (see Titus 1:16).

“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and 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). Why are people still looking for “THE (singular) Antichrist,” when the apostle John wrote long ago that the spirit of antichrist was already in the world?! The spirit of antichrist is an ATTITUDE of rejection of Christ. An example of this would be the many people in the first century who were rejecting the Deity of Christ (e.g. Gnostics, who could not understand how God could have come in the flesh). They were denying a very foundational principle of the Gospel, found in John 1:1 and following!

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 1:7). It may be tempting to take the latter part of this verse "**A** deceiver and **AN** antichrist" to point to a singular Antichrist, but look at the first part of the verse. "For **MANY** deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Each one of these had the spirit of antichrist! Simply put, ANY deceiver who walks about teaching and turning Christ's disciples away from the faith is antichrist, and there are many such false teachers who seek to do so (See 2 Tim. 4:3).

The concept of antichrist is something that must not be minimized. In fact, since John wrote so adamantly against those who held these false doctrines, we must do all we can to avoid going down the same path. But let us remember that the concept of antichrist has more to do with an erroneous religious attitude rather than trying to pinpoint a singular end of the world arch evil Being supposedly coming in the yet future to wreak havoc on God and His people.

With love, Chase