

**8. September 2020**

## **The Anti-Christian Threat and its Defence, Part 2**

### **“The Antichrist and many Antichrists, testimony of the Holy Scriptures”**

The coming of an Antichrist at the end of the times before the return of Christ is expected by watchful Christians who know the Holy Scriptures and the relevant passages. In the literature we also know references to the adversary of Christ.

Sacred Scripture speaks of the fact that many antichrists have appeared, as the following passage from the Epistle of John testifies:

*“Children, this is the final hour; you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and now many Antichrists have already come; from this we know that it is the final hour. They have gone from among us, but they never really belonged to us; if they had belonged to us, they would have stayed with us. But this was to prove that not one of them belonged to us.” (1 Jn 2,18-19)*

The text speaks in the plural here of Antichrists, and probably takes Antichrists in the broadest sense into consideration, who can be false teachers and seduce the faithful, for example. The second biblical text also points to this:

*“There are many deceivers at large in the world, refusing to acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in human nature. They are the Deceiver; they are the Antichrist.” (2 Jn 1,7)*

If we look at these passages, we will see that in the course of history there have been many things that contradict the teachings of the Gospel; e.g. philosophical directions that contradict the revealed truth, political forms of rule, ideologies, post-Christian religions and cults etc.

The Anti-Christ presence can incarnate in different persons. We can also speak of an "antichrist spirit", which manifests itself, for example, in certain mental currents.

There is no doubt that the early Christians regarded those Roman emperors as Antichrists, through whom they suffered cruel persecutions. In them is also reflected what we discover in later literature as a description of Antichrist figures.

In the course of history, we can name rulers who had a have a similarity with the Antichrist to be expected at the end of times, or with his predecessors. Just think of the leaders of the Turks, Talat Pasha and Enver Pasha, who were responsible for the mass murder of the Christian Armenians, of Lenin and Stalin, of Adolf Hiltler, Mao Tse Dung to name some of the most terrible Antichrists of recent times.

We can speak of a parallel line. On the one hand, many Antichrists are meant and on the other hand, there is special talk of an Antichrist who will establish world domination at the end of times. So on the one hand we see that the Antichrist is a permanent phenomenon in history and always and everywhere appears as an opponent of God. Then there is much to indicate that at the end of times a condensation of the mystery of wickedness will be present in a man. Paul writes to the Thessalonians:

*“The mystery of wickedness is already at work, but let him who is restraining it once be removed.” (2 Thess 2,7)*

What both lines have in common is that they are inspired by a Spirit who opposes the divinity of Jesus Christ and either rejects the Gospel, reinterprets it or even wants to take it into service for himself. Be they spiritual currents or concrete persons; they receive their inspiration and power not from God but from demonic sources.

In the same letter to the Thessalonians, Paul speaks in connection with the return of Christ at the end of times.

*"Never let anyone deceive you in any way. It cannot happen until the Great Revolt has taken place and there has appeared the wicked One, the lost One, the Enemy, who raises himself above every so-called God or object of worship to enthrone himself in God's sanctuary and flaunts the claim that he is God. Surely you remember my telling you about this when I was with you?"*

*And the wicked One will appear openly. The Lord will destroy him with the breath of his mouth and will annihilate him with his glorious appearance at his coming. But the coming of the wicked One will be marked by Satan being at work in all kinds of counterfeit miracles and signs and wonders, and every wicked deception aimed at those who are on the way to destruction because they would not accept the love of the truth and so be saved. And therefore God sends on them a power that deludes people so that they believe what is false, and so that those who do not*

*believe the truth and take their pleasure in wickedness may all be condemned.” (2 Thess 2,3-5.8-12)*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church lays down on this subject:

*“Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh.” (CCC 675)*

The focus of my reflections is on the expectation of the coming of a concrete person, who will be the Antichrist described by Scripture, who will come before the Second Coming of Christ or who will still be one of his forerunners.

From the witness of Sacred Scripture, the coming of a concrete person seems logical, if this Antichrist would appear as a "worldly saviour" to lead people to apostasy from Christ! Since he is to be regarded as a person taken into service by the devil, he will try to imitate Christ in order to deceive as many as possible. With these considerations I follow most authors who have dealt with this subject.

His coming would probably be prepared by the spreading of errors, by apostasy, by moral decadence, by the inner weakening of the Church, precisely by the activity of the ever-present anti-Christian spirit.

As a global ruler of the world, he would have to find a set of instruments that would allow him to exercise control over all people! The confusion of the spirit, which is caused by sins, is not difficult to recognize and today's technical possibilities would make a total control of the people possible.

Let us summarise: The Holy Scriptures testify both to the coming of an Antichrist and speaks of many Antichrists. This "son of perdition" appears in the spirit of Lucifer, who is already active in the world, leading people to fall away from God and to establish a World Empire in which he wants to be worshipped.