

The Papacy Is the Antichrist 1 of 3 (1888) - Part 1

by J.A. Wylie

The Papacy is the Antichrist, a counterfeit Christ who has misled the world into believing it is Christianity.

Duration: 1:10:15

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2:1

Topics: "Papacy"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the vision of the doubling of prophecies, indicating their certainty. The apostle Paul is portrayed as the interpreter of these prophecies, revealing the satanic nature of a power that was approaching during his time. This power, known as the mystery of iniquity, has persisted throughout history, outlasting empires and religions. The focus then shifts to the papacy, which has existed for twelve hundred years and has played a significant role in shaping the world. The papacy employed various tactics, such as dividing and conquering, using monks to monitor and control bishops, accumulating wealth, and expanding its dominion.

Transcript

Welcome to The Papacy is the Antichrist by the Reverend Dr. J. A. Wilde read by W. J. Mancaro and produced by Stillwaters Revival Books, the home of the extensive Puritan and Reformation CD sets, Geneva Bibles, Rare Reformation, Classic Covenanters and Calvinistic Books, Homeschooling Helps and other Puritan and Presbyterian resources at great discounts and free by mail and the World Wide Web. Please visit our website at www.swrb.com and or sign up for our email super special discount mailings by emailing your address to add, that is add at swrb.com. If you would like more information on the topics addressed in this tape, please visit our website at www.swrb.com. And now to the message of tape number one from The Papacy is the Antichrist. We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will greatly bless you as you listen.

The Papacy is the Antichrist, a demonstration by Reverend J. A. Wilde, LLD, author of History of Protestantism, History of the Scottish Nation, etc. Published by George McKibben in 1888. The dedication is to the Reverend Ministers of the Church of Scotland with Mr. John Hope's compliments.

Preface The following demonstration is rested on no narrow basis. Its two postulates, like two posterns, admit us into the edifice, but they are not its foundations. The whole economy of redemption and the

whole course of history are the broad substractions on which the argument is based and built up, and the author humbly submits that it cannot be overturned or the conclusion arrived at set aside without dislocating and shaking the structure of both revelation and providence.

The same line of proof which establishes that Christ is the promised Messiah, conversely applied, establishes that the Roman system is the predicted apostasy. In the life of Christ we behold the converse of what the Antichrist must be, and in the prophecy of the Antichrist we are shown the converse of what Christ must be and was. And when we place the Papacy between the two and compare it with each, we find on the one hand that it is the perfect converse of Christ as seen in his life, and on the other that it is the perfect image of the Antichrist as shown in the prophecy of him.

We conclude, therefore, that if Jesus of Nazareth be the Christ, the Roman Papacy is the Antichrist. Chapter 1 The Term Antichrist We shall not go far afield in this discussion, nor is it in the least necessary to do so. The materials for a right decision on the question before us lie close at hand.

The Apostle John, speaking of the great apostasy to arise in Christendom, calls it the Antichrist, and the Pope has taken to himself as the name that best describes his office the title Vicar of Christ. All we shall ask as the basis for our argument are these two accepted facts, namely, that John styles the apostasy the Antichrist, and that the head of the Roman system styles himself Christ's Vicar. The Papacy holds in its name the key of its meaning.

We shall make use of that key in unlocking its mystery and true character. The Papacy cannot complain, though we adopt this line of interpretation. We do nothing more than use the key it has put into our hands.

The Apostle John, we have said, speaking of the apostasy, the coming of which he predicts, styles it the Antichrist. And we have also said that the Papacy, speaking through its representative and head, calls itself the Vicar of Christ. The first, Antichrist, is a Greek word.

The second, Vicar, is an English word. But the two are in reality one, for both words have the same meaning. Antichrist, translated into English, is Vice Christ, or Vicar of Christ.

And Vicar of Christ, rendered into Greek, is Antichrist, Antichristos. If we can establish this, and the ordinary use of the word by those to whom the Greek was a vernacular, is decisive on the point. We shall have no difficulty in showing that this is the meaning of the word Antichrist, even a Vice Christ.

And if so, then every time the Pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ, he pleads at the bar of the world that he is the Antichrist. Moreover, this will clear our way and simplify our discussion. For let it be noted, if Antichrist signifies a Vice Christ, that is, one who comes in the room of Christ, deception, dissimulation, counterfeit, must be an essential element in his character.

In whatever persons or systems that fundamental characteristic is lacking, we fail to find the Antichrist, whatever may be their general opposition to Christ and to Christianity, or whatever other features of the Antichrist they may bear. They may have every other characteristic by which prophecy had described this noted adversary of Christ in his gospel, yet lacking this fundamental one, their claim to this pre-eminently evil distinction cannot be admitted. This enables us to dismiss summarily and at once a host of Antichrists which have been conjured up by persons who have drawn upon their imagination, rather than followed any sound principle of prophetic interpretation.

The cause of the papacy is served by the false glosses and mistaken interpretations of Scripture, which interpose a pseudo-Antichrist between it and prophecy, which unfolds against it so black a record, and suspends above it so terrible a doom. We shall suppose that an atheist or an infidel has been put to the bar to answer it to a charge of being the Antichrist. He has manifested a satanic malignity against the gospel, and has labored to the utmost of his power to destroy it.

He has blasphemed God, execrated Christ, and derided, vilified, and persecuted all who profess his name, and on these grounds he has been assumed to be the Antichrist. The case is no imaginary one. Atheists and scoffers in former ages, Voltaire and Paine in later times, Communists and Pantheists in our own day, have all been arraigned as the Antichrist.

Well, let us suppose that one or other of these notoriously wicked personages or systems has been put to the bar on the charge of being the adversary predicted by John. Who are you? says the judge. Are you a vice-Christ? So you make a profession of Christianity, and under that pretext seek to undermine and destroy it? No, replies the accused, I am no counterfeit.

Christ and his gospel I hate, but I am an open enemy. I fight under no mask. Turning to the likeness drawn by Paul and John of Christ's great rival and opponent, and finding the outstanding and essential feature in the portrait absent in the accused, the judge would be constrained to say, I do not find the charge proven.

Go your way. You are not the Antichrist. Mohabitanism comes nearer than any of the other opposing systems to the Antichrist of the Bible.

Yet it falls a long way short of it. Mohammed did not disavow the mission of Jesus. On the contrary, he professed to hold him in honor as a prophet, and in much the same way do his followers still feel toward Christ.

But Islam does not profess to be an imitation of Christianity. Any counterfeit that can be discovered in Mohammedanism is partial and shadowy when placed alongside the bold, sharp-cut counterfeit of Romanism. It requires a violent stretch of imagination to accept Mohammedanism, or indeed any other known ism, as a vice-Christ.

Of all systems that ever were on the earth or are now upon it, Romanism alone meets all the requirements of prophecy and exhibits all the features of the vice-Christ. And it does so with a completeness and a truthfulness which enables the man who permits himself to be guided by the statements of the Word of God on the one hand and the facts of history on the other to say at once, this is the Antichrist. What we have said is meant to indicate the lines on which our demonstration will proceed.

We must trace the parallelism between their respective chiefs, Christ and the Pope, along the entire line of their career. In this parallelism lies the essence of anti-Christianism and, of course, the strength of our argument. It is this counterfeit, so exact and complete, which has misled the world into the belief that this is Christianity, to the waste of ages, not a few, the unsettling and overthrowing of kingdoms, the stunting of the human understanding, and the loss of millions of immortal souls.

Chapter 2. Antichrist Portrayed Before His Birth It is somewhat remarkable that the clearest, fullest, and most lifelike description of Antichrist we possess is that which was given of him before he arose. The papacy, if we may be allowed to anticipate what it will be the object of the following pages to demonstrate, the papacy has been twelve hundred years in existence, and during all these centuries it has been one of

the main actors in the world. Neither time nor opportunity has been lacking to it for the display of its spirit and aims.

The record of its deeds lies open to the world, and he that runs may read it, and after so long, and, we may add, so dismal an acquaintance with it, it might be supposed that we should now be able to give a fuller and truer description of it than any that could possibly be given before it had come into existence. Yet no, incomparably the most lifelike portrait of the papacy that exists is that which was given by Paul in the first century when writing to the Thessalonian Christians, and which we give below. Paul's is not the only painting of popery on the page of the Bible.

Daniel, centuries before, had foreshadowed the rise of this system in imagery of graphic vividness and dramatic grandeur. A little while after Paul, John, in symbols equally majestic and awful, foretold the advent of the same power. The vision was doubled because the thing was sure.

Paul comes in between these two prophecies, two yet one, as their inspired interpreter. He employs neither figure nor symbol, but in words, plain yet solemn, he lifts the veil and lays bare the infernal origin and satanic character of that power, which, when he wrote, was so near that the Christians to whom he addressed his epistle might almost hear the sound of its approaching footsteps and see the shadow which it had already begun to project upon the church and the world. We quote the passage, 2 Thessalonians 2, verses 1-11.

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 shall not come, except there comes 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, showing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not that when I was yet with you I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. Chapter 3 Antichrist, an Enemy Under a Mask In order to introduce ourselves to our subject, we have taken it for granted that the system described by Paul in the passage we have just quoted is the papacy. This is the thing to be established.

We now proceed to prove this, and provided we shall show on good and conclusive grounds that the system depicted by Paul is the Roman apostasy, and that this is the same system which Daniel and John have portrayed under symbolic imagery, it will follow that one who admits the Bible to be the word of God, and that Paul wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, must believe that the papacy, that is the Roman apostasy, is the Antichrist of Scripture. This is not point of mere speculation. It is a question that has attended upon it great practical issues.

This inquiry has for its object the ascertainment of the true meaning of an important part of the word of God, even the better half of its prophecies. Moreover, on this question must rest the verdict we are to pronounce on that society which calls itself the church, as also the revelations in which we are to stand to it. And on it too must depend whether we shall abandon, or whether we shall continue to occupy the ground which we have been accustomed to regard as our divine central position in our war with popery, or rather whether we ought not to end this war, and confess that we have been fighting all along under a mistake.

Who is Antichrist? It will help us to the right answer to this question if we shall first determine what is Antichrist. Antichrist is an enemy who makes war with the Son of God. Of that there is no doubt.

But what is the form of this war? And under what character does Antichrist carry it on? Does he wage it openly? Or does he fight it under a mask? Does he take the field as an open rebel and a declared foe? Or does he come as a friendly adherent who professes to bring support and help to the cause, which in reality he seeks to undermine and destroy? To determine this point, let us look at the meaning of the word Antichrist as employed in Scripture. The reader sees that the term is a composite one, being made up of two words, Anti- and Christ. The name is one of new formation, being compounded, it would seem, for this very enemy, and by its etymology expressing more exactly and perfectly his character than any older word could.

The precise question now before us is this. What is the precise sense of Anti- in this connection? Does it designate an enemy who says openly and truly, I am against Christ? Or does it designate one who says plausibly, yet falsely, I am for Christ? Which? To determine this, let us look at the force given to this prefix by writers in both classic literature and Holy Scripture. First, the old classic writers.

By these, the preposition Anti- is often employed to designate a substitute. This is, in fact, a very common use of it in the classic writers. For instance, Anti-Basilis.

He who is the locum tenens of a king, or as we should now say, a viceroy. Anti- having in this case the force of the English term vice. He who filled the place of council was Anti-Opatus, pro-council.

He who took the place of an absent guest at a feast was entitled or styled Anti-Depnos. The preposition used in this sense of the great substitute himself, Christ is said to have given himself as an Anti-Lutron, a ransom in the stead of all. Classic usage does not require us to give only one sense to this word and restrict it to one who seeks openly and by force to seat himself in the place of another and by violent usurpation bring that other's authority to an end.

We are at liberty to apply it to one who steals into the office of another under the mask of friendship and while professing to uphold his interests labors to destroy them. This leaves us free to turn to the use of the word in Scripture. The Antichrist comes first into view in our Lord's discourse recorded in Matthew 24.24 and Mark 13.22 For false Christs and false prophets shall arise and show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

Our Lord does not indeed use the word Antichrist but what is almost its synonym, Pseudo-Christ or False Christ, Pseudo-Christos in the Greek. Nevertheless, the persons whose coming he foretells are in the line of Antichrist. They belong to the same family and their grand characteristic is deception.

Manifested, they are not open enemies but pretended friends. They are false Christs and false prophets and as such are forerunners of that great Antichrist who is to succeed them and in whom they are to find their fuller development and final consummation. They shall seek by signs and wonders, false of course, to obscure the glory of Christ's true miracles to weaken the evidence of his messiahship arising therefrom and to draw men away from him and after themselves.

The other place in the New Testament in which reference is made to Antichrist is the first and second epistles of John. The idea which John presents of the Antichrist is quite in harmony with that of our Lord. John looks for him in the guise of a deceiver.

Little children, says John, from his first epistle, chapter 2, verse 18, It is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists. After this announcement of a special and great Antichrist to follow in the wake of those minor Antichrists that were already arrived and were urging their claims on the attention of the world, he comes to look more closely at the giant who was to stand up after these dwarfs had passed away. He notes prominently one characteristic of him, and it is his falsehood.

Antichrist, says John, is to be a liar, verse 22, 1 John chapter 2. Quote, Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Unquote. St. John's words, says Archbishop Trench, seem to me decisive on the matter that resistance to and defiance of Christ, not the false assumption of his character and offices, is the essential mark of Antichrist.

Unquote. That is from Synonyms of the New Testament by R.C. Trench, B.D., page 120, published in Cambridge and London in 1854. Such is Dr. Trench's opinion, but he gives no grounds for it, and we are unable to imagine any.

We draw the exactly opposite conclusion from the Apostle's words, even that the false assumption of his character and offices is an essential mark of Antichrist. He is a liar, says John. But if he comes boldly and truthfully avowing himself the enemy of Christ, how is he a liar? If he avows without concealment his impious design of overthrowing Christ, with what truth can he be spoken of as a deceiver? But such is the character plainly ascribed to him by John, in the second epistle, verse 7, For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

This is a deceiver and an Antichrist. Unquote. Plainly the exegesis, or rather supposition, of Dr. Trench is inadmissible.

Dr. Chalmers had no difficulty in seeing the Roman system in the apostasy predicted by Paul. We find him saying in his scripture readings, Save us, O Lord, from falling away, lest we share in the perdition that waiteth on the great apostasy. We hold the usurpation of Rome to be evidently pointed at, and therefore let us maintain our distance and keep our resolute protest against its great abominations.

That is from Dr. Chalmers' Sabbath Scripture Readings, Volume 1, page 310, as published in Edinburgh in 1848. Archbishop Trench was misled, it may be, by the strength of the term deny. Quote, He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.

But he who does not confess when he is called to do so denies. Such is the use of the word in these applications all through the New Testament. Such is the use John makes of it in this very passage.

Quote, For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. It is clear that Antichrist, as depicted by our Lord and by his Apostle John, is to wear a mask and to profess one thing and act another. He is to enter the church as Judas entered the garden, professedly to kiss his master, but in reality to betray him.

He is to come with words of peace in his mouth, but war in his heart. He is to be a counterfeit Christ, Christ's likeness stamped on base metal. He is to be an imitation of Christ, a close, clever, and astute imitation, which will deceive the world for ages.

Those only accepted who, taught by the Holy Spirit, shall be able to see through the disguise and detect the enemy under the mask of a friend. Antichrist, then, is a counterfeit. But this one mark is not alone sufficient to identify the person on whom it is found as the great apostate.

All deceit in religion is anti-Christian. The other marks must come along with this one to ward us to say that we have found that pre-eminently wicked one and that portentous combination of all evil that is to form the Antichrist. Yet this one mark enables us to test certain theories which have been advanced on this subject.

If Antichrist must necessarily be a deceiver, a false Christ, then no atheist or body of atheists can be Antichrist. No pantheist or body of pantheists can be Antichrist. They are not deceivers.

They are open enemies. They make war in defiance of God and Christ and under the protestation that there is no such person as the Bible affirms filling the office of the world's mediator and savior. They hold the whole affair to be an invention of priests.

Antichrist dared to make no such avowal. It would be fatal to him. Were he to affirm that Christianity is a fable, an out-and-out imposture, he would cut away the ground from under his own feet.

He would deny the very first postulate in his system for there must first be a Christ before there can be an Antichrist. And not less does this mark shut us up to the rejection of the theory which has been advanced with much earnestness and some plausibility that Antichrist is a political character or potentate, some frightfully tyrannical and portentously wicked king who is to arise and for a short space devastate the world by arms. This is an altogether different Antichrist from that Antichrist which prophecy foreshadows.

He may resemble, may surpass him in open violence, but he lacks the profound dissimulation under which Antichrist is to commit his atrocities. The rage of the mere tyrant is indiscriminately vented upon the world at large. Antichrist's rage is concentrated on one particular object and cause.

Nor with any propriety can such a one be said to sit in the temple of God, the seat on which the mock Christ specially delights to show himself. Prophecy absolutely refuses to see in either of these theories the altogether unique and overtopping system of hypocrisy, blasphemy, and tyranny which it has foretold. So far we are helped in our search.

When we are able to put aside some of the false Antichrists, we come more within sight of the true one. We turn now to the prophecy of Paul, and we shall be blind indeed if, after the study of it, we shall be in any doubt as to whose likeness it is that looks forth upon us from this remarkable prediction. The name Antichrist, it is true, does not occur in this prophecy.

It is not needed. John had given the name. Paul presents us with his portrait.

He says the Antichrist has power, a truth, an accuracy, and a fullness, which has left nothing for the eighteenth centuries which have since rolled past to supplement, much less to correct or amend. The strokes with which this portrait is drawn are few, but each is a lightning flash, and every member and feature of the terrible colossus stands revealed. Paul did not paint this portrait and leave it as a riddle to perplex and baffle future ages.

With history in our hands, there is no room for a moment's doubt about it. Since Paul wrote, there has been only one system to which this portrait can apply. It applies to it in every particular, as the photograph agrees in every liniment with the living face from which it is taken.

But it will agree with no other system that now is or ever was on the earth, even as the photograph will not agree with any countenance but that which stamped itself upon the plate of the artist. So clearly did the spirit of prophecy foresee the coming of Antichrist, and so truthfully did he enable Paul to depict him. The key of this prophecy is in the seventh verse.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. The mystery of iniquity. The phrase is a striking one.

It is not simply iniquity. It is the mystery of iniquity. Since the time when the first transgression in Eden opened the door for its entrance, iniquity had never been absent from the earth.

History is little else than a sorrowful recital of iniquities. But now a new epoch was to be opened in the career of evil. A hitherto unexampled and unthought of organization of iniquity was about to appear.

The phrase mystery of iniquity suggests a secret and terrible conspiracy to sin amongst beings of various ranks and faculties, and perhaps also of various natures. Not a mere series of isolated acts, but a skillfully constructed system, the several parts nicely adjusted to one another, and their joint working inducing a product of tremendous evil character surpassing what any former age had witnessed. That mystery was as yet undivulged.

But it was, even now, when Paul wrote, traveling towards the light and would be revealed in due time. The mystery of iniquity. This is our true standpoint, once we may look around over the whole passage.

When surveyed from this position, Paul's prophecy will be seen to have an amplitude of meaning and a depth of import as profound as its range is vast. We venture to think that the height and depth of this prophecy have not yet been very accurately measured or its meaning fully fathomed. What is the mystery of iniquity? The phrase suggests another, the mystery of godliness.

Paul writing to Timothy says, in 1 Timothy 2.16, without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. These two phrases stand alone in the Bible. We read but once of the mystery of godliness, and but once of the mystery of iniquity.

They are the two preeminently grand mysteries of revelation. They stand over against each other. The mystery of iniquity, fashioning its outward character and semblance upon the mystery of godliness, making it its pattern, till at last the mystery of iniquity presents itself to the world a perfect imitation and counterfeit of the mystery of godliness.

Seeing the two mysteries stand so related to each other, the one mystery interprets the other. We must give the same height and depth, the same length and breadth to the one as to the other, so far as the diverse origin and character of the two will permit. We ask then, what is the precise idea of the Holy Spirit

in the phrase the mystery of godliness? Does the phrase denote simply that system of spiritual truth which God has been developing during the successive ages of the world, which now at last stands fully manifested in the gospel? No doubt this is part of the mystery of godliness, but it is not the whole, nor indeed is it the principal part of it.

The mystery of godliness is not the development of a system only, it is the development of a person. So does the apostle define it. Without controversy, says he, great is the mystery of godliness.

God was manifest in the flesh. It was the gradual development of certain great and supernatural principles and truths through symbols, prophecies and typical persons, till at last they attained their completed development and full manifestation in the person of the Son of God. The mystery of iniquity, which stands over against the mystery of godliness as its parallel and counterfeit, must be like it, like it in having its source outside the world, like it in its slow and gradual development, and like it in its final culmination.

Of it too, we must say, it is not the development of a system only, it is the development of a person. It is the gathering together of all the principles of evil and the marshalling of them into one organization or host and their embodiment at last in a representative person or head. Antichrist.

He was to be the grand outcome of the apostasy, not its mere ornamental head, but its executive. He was to guide its councils, inspire its policy, execute its decrees. In short, he was to be the organ through which its terrible powers were to be put forth.

This we take to be the ruling idea in the passage. Just as the mystery of godliness is not merely the manifestation of the system of godliness, but the manifestation of God himself, so the mystery of iniquity is not merely the manifestation of the system of iniquity, but the manifestation of the person or author of iniquity. The prophecy brings us two mysteries, the one the counterfeit in all points of the other.

We have an invisible agent, even God, beneath the one. We have an invisible agent, even Satan, beneath the other. We have the one mystery culminating at last in an incarnation, God manifest in the flesh.

We see the other in like manner culminating in an incarnation, in a loose sense, for all its principles concentrate themselves in and show themselves to the world through its living head on earth, Antichrist. We may go even farther and say that there is as real an incarnation of the spirit and mind of Satan in the mystery of iniquity as there is of the spirit and mind of God in the mystery of godliness. And, as in Christ, God and man meet, so in Antichrist, his counterfeit and rival, the human and the superhuman meet and act together.

Earth-born man and archangel fallen. Chapter 6, Unfolding of the Two Mysteries The apostle, having brought these two mysteries upon the stage and shown them to us standing face to face, goes on to trace the parallel between the two. This parallel is distinctly discernible in every stage of their career.

The apostle traces it first in their rise, second in their coming, and third in their full and completed development. Let us follow the parallelism step by step and stage by stage. In their rise, for the mystery of iniquity, doth already work.

It was already in existence. Its energies were all astir, but it worked in secret and was inaudible to the world. It worked as leaven doth in the meal, which keeps silently fermenting in the mass till the whole has been leavened.

It worketh as the seed does in the soil, which, germinating in the darkness, pierces the clod, bursts into the light, and, receiving an accession of strength from the sun and air, shoots up in the stem and at last culminates in flower and fruit. The mystery of iniquity worked as treason works. The conspirators meet in secret conclave.

They concert their plans unknown to the world. They speak in whispers, but their schemes at length ripen, and now they come abroad into the light of day and proclaim in the housetops what they had hatched in darkness. So did the mystery of iniquity work.

So too did the mystery of godliness work. Even at this initial stage of the two mysteries, we trace a resemblance between them. Let us think how long the gospel worked before it issued in the incarnation of the Son of God.

For ages and for generations, Christianity was a hidden mystery. The redemption of men by means of the incarnation of the Son of God was a secret, profoundly hidden in the counsels of God in eternity, and even after time had begun its course, it long remained a secret unknown to the world. Bit by bit, this mystery revealed itself.

First, the idea of incarnation was dimly made known. In the first promise, mention was made of the seed of the woman, and on this obscure intimation was built the hope of a deliverer, and that hope descended the ages with the race. The idea of expiation was next revealed in the appointment of sacrifice, which also with the hope which is expressed and sustained came down the stream of time.

Next, a complete system of ceremonial worship was instituted to reveal the coming redemption in the amplitude of its blessings. Still the veil was upon it. It stood before the world in type.

There arose an illustrious series of august personages who were forerunners or types of Christ. They exhibited to the church the offices which her incarnate Savior was to fill and the work He was to execute. There stood up an order of prophetic men who prefigured Him as the Great Teacher.

There stood up an order of sacrificial men who prefigured Him as the One Priest. There stood up an order of kingly men who prefigured Himself as a monarch, and a monarch who was to be higher and mightier than any of the monarchs of earth. The kings of the house of Judah foreshadowed Him as sprung of a royal stock and the heir of a throne, which all nations should serve and before which all kings should bow.

Thus did the mystery of godliness work, unfolding and still unfolding itself as the ages passed on, the type growing ever the clearer and the prophecy ever the fuller, till at last the mystery stepped out from behind the veil and stood before the world, perfected, finished, and fully revealed in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, God manifest in the flesh, and centering in His person and flowing out from it through His life and ministry and death as raised from the sun were all the glorious doctrines of the gospel. In like manner the mystery of iniquity kept traveling by the same stages towards the day of its final revelation. It was not the production of one, but of many ages.

The fashion of the world changed. Great empires, which had filled the earth with their glory and burdened it with their oppression, went down into the grave. Worships arose with their powerful hierarchies and grand ceremonials, and when their day was over, passed away, leaving only ruined fanes and deserted altars to tell that they had ever been.

But the mystery of iniquity, as if deathless, like the being which inspired it, refused to succumb to these shocks. It kept on its course over broken thrones and desecrated altars, ever reaching forth to that high goal where it should show itself to the nations and be the wonder of all that dwell upon the earth. Silently and stealthily, this mystery pursued its course.

For ages and for generations, it too was a hidden mystery. Paul tells us that it was working in his day. This warrants us to say that Antichrist was then born and was making trial of his infantile powers.

The world did not hear his working, but Paul, by the spirit of prophecy, did so and sounded an alarm to the church. The Gnostics and other teachers of error that had gone forth into the world so early as Paul's day were Antichrists, and those in a special who propagated the delusion that it was a phantom which the Jews seized and crucified on Calvary. They seemed to admit the mission of Christ, yet they subverted the great end of his coming by denying his incarnation and, by consequence, the whole work of redemption.

But though these teachers were Antichristian, they were not the Antichrist. After them, Paul gave warning that there should come one far mightier than they, the lachet of whose shoes they were not worthy to loose. They were misgrown and misshapen Antichrists.

Their system of error was immature and their power of attack contemptible compared with that full-grown Antichristianism which would stand up on after days and say to the world, I am Christ, and under that color make war upon the true Christ. Nay, even before the apostles' day, the mystery of iniquity had begun to work. From the beginning, Satan had made the line of error to run parallel with the line of truth.

He had been a close observer of God's plan from the first, and he made it the model on which to form his own. Never was the divine plan advanced a stage without Satan making a corresponding advance in his plan, as like to the other as it was possible to make it in all outward respects, but essentially antagonistic to it in principle and spirit. Satan has been a counterfeit from the beginning.

Even in the times of paganism, he never showed himself as an avowed adversary or waged open war. He nowhere established a system of atheism. He permitted the great idea of a god to be received in the pagan world, but he took care to intercept the influence of that great truth in the heart and life by seducing men to the worship of many gods, and these gods in man's own likeness.

He set up altar against altar, priesthood against priesthood, and sacrifice against sacrifice, and he enlarged and beautified his ritual in the heathen world till it seemed no unworthy rival of the divinely instituted ceremonial on Mount Moriah. Moreover, he sent forth pioneers to keep alive expectation in the pagan world of some great one yet to come. He showed to the world a colossal picture of the Antichrist, while yet he was at a distance.

For what were the Caesars, king and priest of the Roman world, but types of that more terrible power, temporal and spiritual, that was to center in the chair of the popes? That colossal image he kept full in the world's view till the fullness of the time for Antichrist's appearance had arrived, and then he withdrew the image and brought forth a great reality, the man of sin now come to his full birth, though not as yet to his full stature, and he found for him a seat and throne on the seven hills. Chapter 7 THE PASTOR BECOMES A MONARCH TEN CENTURIES OF CLIMBING Beginning his career in the days of Paul, it was not till the thirteenth century that the man of sin reached his maturity and stood before the world full grown. During all these ages, he kept stretching himself higher and higher, piling assumption upon assumption and prerogative upon prerogative, till at last he raised himself to a height from which he looked

down not only upon all churches, but upon all kings and kingdoms.

He claimed to be the world's one bishop and world's one monarch. In the first century, he is seen as the humble pastor whose only care is to feed his flock and who looks for no crown save that which the chief shepherd may be pleased to give him at his appearing. In the thirteenth, he is beheld as a mighty potentate who stands with his foot planted on every throne and realm of Christendom.

He writes himself a king of kings and he claims by divine right to administer all the affairs of earth. If we accept Christianity, there is no similar example in history of what was at first so small becoming in the end so great. Three hundred popes and more are seen one after the other steadily prosecuting this idea without once relaxing in their efforts or turning aside from the pursuit.

Each in succession takes up the plan at the point where his predecessor had left it and carries it a stage nearer its consummation. For thirteen hundred years on end, we see the enterprise pushed forward with an undeviating constancy and an unflinching courage with a perseverance and a subtlety. In short, a combination of powers never before seen working together for the realization of any other project.

There is more than man here. The spirit who conceived this plan, who inspired the actors and kept them working century after century on the same lines till at last the goal was reached was more than human. Paul tells us that its author was Satan.

A great apostasy was to precede the rise of the Antichrist. In truth, the man of sin was to grow out of that apostasy. Be not troubled or alarmed, says the apostle writing to the Thessalonians, as if time were to be wound up and Christ were to return.

Thessalonians 2, verses 2 and 3 says, that day shall not come except there come a falling away first and that man of sin be revealed. Not a falling away, but the falling away as it is in the original Greek. Some great and notable apostasy.

The church must pass through a dark and terrible shadow before Christ shall return. The prophets had spoken not obscurely of that evil time. It was a burden of Daniel's prophecy.

It was repeated in the symbolic pictureings of John. Paul in his other writings had referred to it, portraying with brief but vivid touches the essential characteristics of the power which at that era was to cast his dark shadow on the world. Hardly had the early persecution ceased till that falling away set in.

Jerome lifts the veil in the fourth century and disclosed a truly melancholy picture. In vain we look for the humility, the simplicity and the purity of the early church. The gold refined in the furnace of ten persecutions is waxing dim.

The vine which Paul planted at Rome is being transformed into the vine of Sodom. The pastors of the church are becoming inflamed with the love of riches and are striving with one another for preeminence. Rome daily sees her bishop ride forth in a gilded chariot drawn by prancing steeds.

Her clergy show themselves attired in robes of silk. The members of their flock crowd alternately the church and the theater and rush with indecent haste from superstitious rites performed at the tombs of the martyrs to the games and sports of the circus. The apostasy has fairly set in.

The corruption grows with the current of the centuries. It shapes itself into system. It builds error upon error and buttresses itself all around with assumptions and falsehoods.

The organization in which it enshrines itself necessarily and naturally finds for itself a chief or head. Now comes the pope and his hierarchy. The man of sin has appeared.

He is seen to rise out of the earth of a paganized Christianity. Like the soil from which he sprung, he is pagan in essence, though a Christian in appearance. Several notable events helped him to attain his full stature.

We must indicate a few, not all of these, for it is impossible to write the history of thirteen centuries in one short chapter. The first event which contributed and contributed essentially to the development of the papacy was the removal of the emperor from Rome. Had Caesar continued to reside in his old capital, he would, as the phrase is, have sat upon the pope, and this aspiring ecclesiastic could not have shot up into the powerful potentate which prophecy had foretold.

But Constantine, A.D. 334, removed to the new Rome on the Bosphorus, leaving the old capital of the world to the bishop of Rome, who was henceforth the first and most influential personage in that city. It was then, probably, that the idea of founding an ecclesiastical monarchy suggested itself to him. He had fallen heir, by what must have seemed a lucky accident, to the old capital of the world.

He was, moreover, possessor of the chair of Peter, or believed himself to be so, and out of these two, the old town of the Caesars and the old chair of the apostle, it might even be possible, so doubtless he reasoned, to fabricate an empire that would one day rival and even overtop that of the emperors. These, it might have been thought beforehand, were but slender materials to bear the weight of so great an enterprise, yet with their help, and aided doubtless by deeper than mere human counsel, he projected a sovereignty which has not had its like on earth, which survived the fall of the Roman Empire, which lived through all the convulsions and overturnings of the Middle Ages, and which has come down to our day and has the art, when men believe it about to expire, of rallying its powers and coming back upon the world. About this time, moreover, the equality which had reigned among the pastors of the church in the primitive age was broken.

The bishops claimed superiority above the presbyters, nor was their equality even among the bishops themselves. They took precedence not according to their learning or their talents or their piety, but according to the rank of the city in which their see was placed. Finally, a new and loftier order arose overtopping the episcopate.

Christendom was partitioned into five great patriarchs, Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. These were the five great cities of the empire, and their bishops were constituted the five great princes of the church. Now came the momentous question, for a while so keenly agitated, which of the five shall be the first? Constantinople claimed this honor for her patriarch on the ground that it was the residence of the emperor.

Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem each put in its claim, but to no effect. Constantinople found, however, a powerful rival in the old city on the banks of the Tiber. Rome had been the head of the world, the throne of the Caesars.

Around it was still the halo of a thousand victories, and that gave it a mysterious influence over the imaginations of men who began to see in its bishop the first ecclesiastic of the Christian world. The popular suffrage had pronounced in favor of the Roman bishop before his rank had received imperial ratification. He was installed as the first of the five patriarchs in A.D. 606.

The emperor Phocas, displeased with the bishop of Constantinople, who had condemned the murder of Maurice, by which Phocas opened his way to the imperial dignity, made Boniface III universal bishop. The imperial edict, however, gave to the Roman bishop only the precedence among the five patriarchs. It gave him no power or jurisdiction over them.

Mere rank, the bishops of Rome held to be but an empty honor. What they coveted was substantial power. Their policy was now shaped with the view of reducing the whole clergy of the church into obedience to the Roman chair and exalting the popes to supreme and absolute sovereignty.

Centuries passed away, in the course of which, by the help of many an artifice and under cover of many a pretext, the Roman bishops slowly extended their power over the West. The darkness, which accompanied the descent of the Gothic nations, favored their project in a high degree. Bad wares, says Puffendorf in his introduction to the history of Europe, are best vended in the dark, or at least in a dim light.

Some of the wares vended in these dark times were sufficiently remarkable. Out of many, we give but two examples. The emperor Constantine, by his last will and testament, was made to bequeath to Sylvester, bishop of Rome, the whole Western Empire, including palace, regalia, and all the belongings of the master of the world.

A goodly dowry, verily, for the poor fishermen. Then came another windfall to the papacy, in the shape of the decretals of Isidore. This last showed the church to her equal surprise and delight that her popes from Peter downwards had held the same state, lived in the same magnificence, and promulgated their pontifical will in briefs, edicts, and bulls in the same authoritative and lordly style as the grand popes of the Middle Ages.

Both documents, it is unnecessary to say, were sheer forgeries. They are acknowledged by Romanists to be so. They could not have stood a moment's scrutiny in an enlightened age, but they were accepted as genuine in the darkness of the times that gave them birth, and vast conclusions were founded upon them.

The fabrications of Isidore were made the substructions of canon law, and that stupendous fabric of legislation is still maintained to be of divine authority, despite that it is now acknowledged to be founded on a forgery. The northern nations arrived in southern Europe in the fifth and succeeding centuries ignorant of Christianity. This was another cause that favored the advancement of the man of sin.

These nations, on their arrival in Italy, beheld a great spiritual potentate seated in the chair of Caesar. He told them that he was the successor of Peter the Apostle, whom Christ had constituted his vicar on earth, with power to transmit all his prerogatives, spiritual and temporal, to his successors in his office. This was the only gospel the Pope ever preached to the barbarian tribes, and they had no means of testing the legitimacy of these mighty claims.

In the Pope himself, they recognized no very distant resemblance to their own archdruid. The rites of the Roman temples were not unlike the worship they had practiced in their pagan homes. They had easy access to the baptismal font, their pagan beliefs and manners forming no impediment.

Nation after nation entered the Roman pale, the Franks leading the way, and earning for themselves the title of the eldest son of the Church. The Gothic nations had found in the Pope, before whose chair they now bowed down, a common spiritual father. Thus was accomplished another notable stage in the development of the papacy.

His dignity enhanced by this vast accession of new subjects, the Pope himself set to strengthen his power within the Church by completing the subjection and vassalage of the clergy. He let slip no opportunity that offered to compass this end. Since the fifth century, the bishops who lived on this side of the Alps used to go to Rome to visit the sepulchres of the apostles Peter and Paul.

This journey was a voluntary one being undertaken to gratify the devout or superstitious feelings of the pious excursionist. In no long time it was made obligatory, and those who failed to present themselves at the apostolic threshold were subjected to rebuke as lukewarm in their devotion to the Holy Chair. It was next interpreted in the sense that the itinerant bishops had sought confirmation at Rome and that all bishops ought to go there for that end.

Thus there came another accession of prerogative and dignity to the papal chair. Further, it was a usual practice of churches and bishops to ask the advice of the Roman church in matters of consequence and difficulty or crave the right interpretation of particular canons. When they at Rome perceived that their advice was taken as a decision, they began to send their decrees before they were demanded on pretense that Rome, being the first sea of the Christian world, her bishop ought to take care that the canons and ecclesiastical laws were duly kept.

Hence another encroachment upon the liberties of churches and pastors and another accession to papal dignity and jurisdiction. And further, when differences or quarrels arose between bishop and bishop or between church and church, nothing was more natural than for the parties to solicit the mediation of the bishop of Rome. The pope willingly undertook the task of composing their contentions, but the price he exacted was a still further surrender of the liberties of the church.

He thence took occasion to assume the office of a judge and to represent his chair as a tribunal to which he had a right to summon parties. At times, he came in between the metropolitan and his diocesan, and on one pretext or another deposed the latter to the waking of the jurisdiction of the former. Moreover, it sometimes happened that parties who had been condemned before provincial tribunals were encouraged to appeal to Rome, where the cause was reheard and the provincial sentence that might be revoked.

By these stealthy and persistent steps, the pope contrived to keep on the ascending grade. There followed other most ingenious devices all for the same end. Among these was the pall of consecration.

The pall was sent to all bishops from the pope at first as a gift. It was next represented as indispensable, and that without it no bishops could discharge the functions of his office. Thus a new hold was obtained over the clergy, and a new method invented of replenishing the papal coffers, for a high price was put on this mystic article of dress, which was woven of the wool of the lambs of St. Agnes.

To the same end were annats imposed. This was the sum paid by bishops when they changed from one sea to another, a practice allowed by the pope for the gain it brought him. The multiplication of monks and friars tended to the same end.

The pope summoned into existence the core of the regular clergy to play them off against the army of the seculars. He acted on the maxim divide and conquer. The monks were a check upon the bishops.

They watched their proceedings and carried their report to Rome. They had acquired a vast reputation for holiness and the direction of consciences through the confessional was mainly in their hands. They had discovered the secret of amassing riches by the arts of mendicancy.

They swarmed over Europe and were thoroughly devoted to the interests of the papal sea. And if any bishop set himself in opposition to the pope, they raised such a clamor against him as speedily convinced him that he had no alternative but submission. Especially did the English monk Winfred, who changed his name to Boniface, enlarge the papal dominion.

This man is commonly but erroneously credited with the first Christianization of Germany. Invested with the authority of the pope's legate, he traversed the countries on the east of the Rhone, rooting out the schools and churches of the evangelical faith, which had been numerous planted in that region of Europe by the cul-de-missionaries of the Irish and Scottish nations, substituting in their room Roman monasteries and cathedrals. This was the work of Boniface, a work well-pleasing to Rome inasmuch as it greatly widened the bounds of the pontifical sway.

Among the events of these disastrous ages contributing to the growth of the papal power, not the least influential were the crusades. They evoked a mighty outburst of enthusiasm around the papal chair. They placed powerful kings, vast treasures, and countless soldiers at the service of the pope.

He took it into his own management the estates of those who went to fight for the recovery of the Holy Land, exempting their owners from the jurisdiction of the civil power in both civil and criminal causes. When the fury of the crusades had spent itself, it was found that the spirit of princes was broken, their resources dried up, their realms impoverished by the loss of their subjects, and the only institution that had profited by the frenzy was the papacy, which now, every other interest abased, rose aloft in greater grandeur than ever. Nor was this the end of the matter.

The fanatical fury which had found its first fearful discharge on the plains of Syria was diverted back to the land whence it had come, and there it vented without exhausting itself in those bloody persecutions and wars against heretics which raged for centuries in Christendom. Chapter 8 The King with the Three Crowns The Vicar The crusades have carried us into the 13th century. We must turn back to the 8th and 9th centuries and note certain political changes that occurred in those ages which contributed material aid to the papacy in fulfilling its destiny.

It was the deep aim of the Pope to plant his seat in a place where he should owe no subjection to any civil power. He desired to have a country of his own, such as might be sufficient to maintain his grandeur, and whence he should reign as a temporal king as well as a spiritual sovereign. For a business like this much time and labor were needed.

The project was manifestly unattainable so long as an emperor reigned in the West or the Gothic monarchy subsisted in Italy. But strange to say events conspired to make empty and void a place where the Pope might set up his combined spiritual and temporal sovereignty so long his cherished but unavowed aim. The first step was the overthrow of the Gothic power in Italy by Justinian.

Italy and Rome now became a province of the Eastern Empire. The jurisdiction of the absent emperor was henceforward shadowy and weak, but even that slight restraint was impatiently borne, and Pope Gregory II began to plot how to be rid of it altogether. The conflict between the Eastern and Western churches on the subject of image worship was then raging.

The Romans zealously maintained the cause of images. The emperor with the Eastern church were ranged in opposition. Pope Gregory instigated the Romans to refuse the tribute to the emperor.

The revolt was successful. The imperial representative at Ravenna was slain, and the last vestiges of the emperor's jurisdiction over Roman Italy were annihilated. It is worthy of note, by the way, that the Romans, by their revolt against their lawful emperor, put their necks under a yoke that continued to gall them for twelve centuries.

They did not succeed in breaking it until 1870. The Pope was now in sight of independent temporal sovereignty, but he had not yet fully achieved it. Tidings out of the North troubled him.

The Longobards had crossed the Alps and were already at Ravenna. There was no power in the spiritual artillery to arrest the victorious advance of these hardy warriors. In his extremity, Pope Zachary turned his eyes to Pepin, who, from Grand Marshal, had become king of France.

The Pope did not supplicate in vain. Pepin first, and his son Charlemagne next, A.D. 774, conquered the Longobards and endowed the papal chair with all the cities and lands in Italy which had been subject to the jurisdiction of the Greek rulers. The Pope was now a crowned monarch.

This was the third intervention by arms in the Pope's behalf and the third Gothic power which had fallen before him. First, the Vandals established themselves in the diocese proper of the Pope, occupying his predestined domain and hindering his predestined development. The arms of Justinian, under his general Belisarius, swept them off.

Second, the Ostrogoths planted themselves in Italy, and their near neighborhood overawed the Pope and prevented his expansion. They too were rooted out by the arms of Justinian. Last came, as we have said, the Longobards, pressing onwards to the gates of Rome.

The sword of France drove them back. Thus a field was kept clear on which the Pope might develop both his spiritual and temporal sovereignty. And thus was fulfilled what Daniel, in chapter 7, verse 8, had foretold, that of the ten horns or dynasties of the modern Europe, three should be plucked up before the little horn or papacy.

Their kingdoms and crowns were given to the Pope, and it is probable that it was in memory of these events that it became customary for the Pope in the following centuries to array himself in a tiara. The pastor of the Tiber had become a monarch with a triple crown. Was the Pope now content? He sat amid the princes and kings of earth as their equal.

But to be simply their equal he held to be an affront to his superhuman office as God's vice-regent. He aspired to plant his throne among the stars and thus look down upon all the dignities and principdoms of earth. And to this dazzling height he at last climbed up.

There arose in the eleventh century a Pope of vast capability, of inflexible resolution, and towering pride, Gregory VII Hildebrand. He put before the world with a precision, a boldness, and an argumentative force,

never till then brought to its support the claim to be the Vicar of Christ. This was the foundation stone on which he rested his scheme of pontifical jurisdiction and grandeur.

As Christ's vicar he claimed to surpass all earthly monarchs in glory and power as far as the sun surpasses the moon in brightness. He claimed in short to be God upon the earth. There followed a series of Popes who struggled through two dreadful centuries of war and bloodshed to convert Gregory's theory into fact.

The struggle was successful in the end, the miter triumph over the empire. The scheme of Gregory VII in all its amplitude of jurisdiction and magnificence and, we may add, in all its amplitude of despotism and blasphemy was exhibited to the world in the person and reign of Innocent III in the thirteenth century. The history of the world does not show another achievement of equal magnitude.

The glory of the pharaohs, the state and power of the kings of Babylon, the victories and magnificence of the Caesars all pale before this great conquest of the Popes. Now had come the noon of the papacy. But, as we have remarked elsewhere, the noon of the Popedom was the midnight of the world.

The career, both of Christ and of Antichrist, was to end on a throne, though each was to reach his destined elevation by a very different road. Not till we find them on their respective thrones shall we see the parallelism perfected and completed. This we must reserve for a subsequent chapter.

Meanwhile, we pursue the parallelism through its successive preparatory stages till it reaches this great climax. This ends tape one of the Papacy as the Antichrist by the Reverend Dr. J. A. Wiley, read by W. J. Mankaro, and produced by S. Stillwater's Revival Books. Thank you for listening, and we hope you will go on to the next tape in this series.

If you would like more information on the topics addressed in this tape, please visit our website where we carry an extensive selection of books, CDs, and tapes, as well as numerous other resources, some free, on just about every topic of interest to the contemporary Christian. Our website is www.swrb.com And be sure to sign up for our email super special discount mailings by emailing us at [add](mailto:add@swrb.com), and that is a-d-d, at s-w-r-b dot com if you would like to learn more.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3302.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ja-wylie/the-papacy-is-the-antichrist-1-of-3-1888-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net