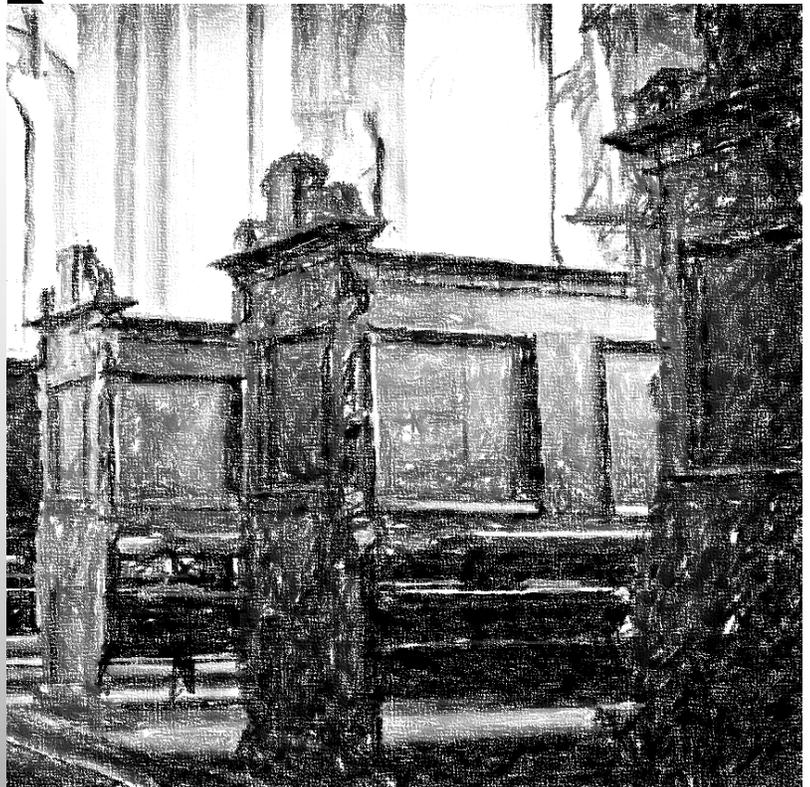




St. Paul's Lutheran Church
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The Epistle of First John

Responding to Threats Against The Church's One Foundation

1 John 2:18-29

Countless books in our time have been written on the subject of the Antichrist. For example, fiction books in the Christian marketplace talk about the end of the world with Christians battling an Antichrist. And even nonfiction books have been written about the identity of the Antichrist that claims Donald Trump, Bill Clinton, Henry Kissinger, and Brock Obama are the Antichrist.

All of this fascination with the Antichrist goes back to the epistle of 1 John. John is the only author in the Bible to use the term Antichrist, and he does so in verses 18-29. Now, even though John is the only one to exclusively use the term 'Antichrist,' the Apostle Paul and the rest of the disciples also had knowledge of this revelation. (See 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 for Paul's comments on the 'man of lawlessness,' as well as Jesus' comments in Matthew 24 on many falsely coming in the name of Jesus.)

But concerning the term Antichrist, what is precisely meant by the term? The first part of the word, 'anti,' means two things: 1) against, opposition, 2) instead, substitute. With respect to 1 John, John uses the word 'anti' as 'against' or 'opponent.'

Now, considering the fact that the Antichrist(s) is in opposition to Christ and the Light, it would be easy to believe that the Antichrist(s) is a pagan dictator. However, John is very clear that the Antichrist(s) originates from the church. The Apostle Paul makes this abundantly clear as well, stating that the Antichrist sits in the very temple of God (2 Thess. 2:4). Thus, no matter how hostile to Christ and Christianity the pagan world may be, they cannot be the Antichrist(s) for they do not originate from within the church.

Our Lutheran Reformers had a lot to say about antichrists and the Antichrist in what is called, "The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope." They clearly define the criteria of what makes a person into an Antichrist.

- 1) An Antichrist is not a pagan ruler but one who is a supposed supporter of the church.
- 2) An Antichrist establishes authority for himself in the church - there is no authority above him.
- 3) An Antichrist invents doctrines that conflict with God's Holy Word, especially the Gospel.
- 4) An Antichrist refuses to be judged by the church or by anyone else, thus making himself into God.

- 5) An Antichrist refuses to be judged by the church or by anyone else, thus making himself into God.
- 6) An Antichrist gives nobody the ability to have the podium, except his minions, who agree with everything he teaches. There is no opportunity to disagree.
- 7) An Antichrist defends his wretched theology, power, and control with savagery – killing so-called rebels.

Thinking through this criteria it is not difficult to understand why the Lutheran Reformers considered the Pope as the Antichrist (and still do). The Pope clearly met all the criteria stated above and exemplified it during the 1500s.

But John does not only mention an Antichrist but antichrists – plural. That is to say; John experienced many antichrists who exerted a tremendous influence upon the church. And who are these antichrists? They are false teachers who promote doctrines that are against the message of Christ-crucified for the forgiveness of sins. Antichrists are agents of darkness, not promoting the Light.

Perhaps it is important to note at this time that the Devil and darkness cannot create but only imitate and pervert God’s good gifts. For example, Rev. Bryan Wolmueller created a helpful sheet showing a Catechism Worldview vs. the Anti-Catechism Worldview. The content of the sheet – with Pastor Richard’s adaptations – is listed below:

<u>Catechism (Light)</u>	<u>Anti-Catechism (Dark)</u>
<i>Ten Commandments</i>	<i>Anti-Commandments</i>
1) God	Atheism & Agnosticism
2) Good Doctrine	Witchcraft, Lies, & Deceit
3) God’s Word	Secularism & Nihilism
4) Authority	Anarchy & Rebellion
5) Life	Abortion, Euthanasia, & Death
6) Marriage	Sexual Hedonism
7) Property	Greed & Communism
8) Good Reputation	Group Identity
9) Contentment	Covetous Fueled Entertainment
10) Contentment	Narcissistic Consumption of G&S
<i>Apostles’ Creed</i>	<i>Anti-Creed</i>
Creation	Evolution & Gnosticism
Justification	Self-Justification
The Church	Mysticism
<i>Sacraments</i>	<i>Anti-Sacraments</i>
Baptism	Gender & Race Identity/Sex. Orientation
Confession	Conceal & Celebrate Sin
Lord’s Supper	Works Righteousness

Why is this important? It is important so that one should not be deceived by the Anti-Catechism – darkness. It is important to know the tactics of darkness – the tactics of the Devil, world, and the sinful old Adam.

