

BEWARE OF ANTICHRISTS IN RELIGION

1 John 2:18–19

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INTRODUCTION

The antichrist was first spoken of in prophecy (**Dan. 11:36 - 45**). Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ spoke again concerning the antichrist in terms of false christs and false prophets (**Matt. 24 : 23 - 26, Mark 13 : 5 - 8**).

*"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." (**Matt. 24 : 23 - 26**).*

Fulfillment of the prophecy of the coming of antichrists was however confirmed in **1 John 2:18 - 19** thus: *"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. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been with us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."*

Who is an antichrist? An antichrist finds true definition in the Bible itself as follow: *"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. " (**1 John 2 : 22 - 23**).*

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 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 : 1 - 3).

From the foregoing definitions, an antichrist is the person or group of persons whose beliefs, teachings and practices are against who Jesus Christ is, and what He stands for.

MANIFESTATION OF ANTICHRISTS

The presence of antichrists has found manifestation in both the religious and non-religious worlds (such as the academic, government or political circles).

IDENTIFICATION OF ANTICHRIST RELIGIONS

In turn, the antichrist is manifested in religions that are both within and outside Christendom, some of which are identified below:

1. Roscicrucian Order (AMORC)
2. Eckankar
3. The Grail Message (or Movement)
4. Hare Krishna
5. Hinduism
6. Buddhism
7. Judaism
8. Aethus Society
9. Islam
10. Shintoism
11. Zoroastrianism
12. Confucianism
13. Traditional Religion
14. Sat-Guru Maharaj Ji
15. Olumba Olumba Obu (OOO)
16. Godism
17. Freemason
18. Rainbow Focus
19. Hermetic Mystic Schools
20. Jesus of Oyingbo
21. Some Denominational Churches

BELIEFS, TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES OF ANTICHRIST RELIGIONS

Roscicrucian Order (AMORC) : This religion regards itself as the university of life. It claims to be an educational, philosophical and cultural organisation for men and women who are devoted to the study, investigation and practical application of spiritual and natural laws. Members engage in what they termed 'evolution of soul consciousness' popularly known as abstract projection or travel. They worship in temples known as

Pronoai, Chapters or Lodges. Members also have individual private shrines. They believe in seeing the future and reincarnation (**Job 14 : 12, Job 7 : 6 - 10, Col. 2 : 8**).

Teachings: (i) God exists (ii) Man exists (iii) Man must establish a relationship with God.

Eckankar : They believe in reincarnation and also in the law of KARMA which is the law of cause and effect. That when one is born, the person is born a sinner as a result of sins committed in former lives which here and now is waiting payment. That as one lives one life after another, the person is paying the debt for the sins he has committed in former lives. They say the person is continuously reincarnated until finally he pays in full for all debts (sins). Then after, the person goes into the sea of NIRVANA, which means really, oblivion (air, spirit, disappearance). They also believe man could be reincarnated in forms other than human being (**Heb. 9 : 27**).

The Grail Message (or Movement) : The Grail Message is also known as Grail Movement. It is founded by Abdu Ru Shin, an Austrian-born Philosopher. Members are known as adherents or cross-bearers. They believe in reincarnation and the law of Karma. They believe whatever happens to one in this life is as a result of previous existence, called Karmic burden, when the human soul reincarnates from one primordial plane to another in the course of its journey back to paradise. According to Abdu Ru Shin, there is an immutable law in creation that demands that every human being must reap what he sows in the previous life, (unlike 'all your sins are forgiven' doctrines of Christians). Grail Movement also believes that anyone who dies, can reincarnate several times until he or she is able to free himself from the karmic burden before ascending to another plane. The Grail Message uses a parallel book, "*In The Light of the Truth*" where the body's canon of beliefs are gleaned from. The Grail Movement adherents believe their message is the fulfillment of Jesus Christ's prophecy about the Comforter, who will come before the end of the earth. They emphasise that the Grail Message is an extension of the fulfillment of many of Jesus Christ's teachings. Adherents believe Abdu Ru Shin also brought truth that had never been revealed to mankind before. It teaches that Christ was not born without physical procreation. (**Rom. 3 : 25**).

Hare Krishna: Believes and worships many gods. They are vegetarians. They equate the souls of animals to that of man (**Gen. 9 : 3**). They also believe in soul projection. They equally pay much attention to spirits (**1 Tim. 4 : 1 - 4**).

Sat-Guru Maharaj Ji : Guru Maharaj Ji, born Mohammed Ajirobatan Ibrahim, is a Nigerian. He has declared himself to be a Living Perfect Master, and he is also called the "Black Jesus". He says that he has power over all illnesses and all problems affecting humanity. Its members regard themselves as "One Love Family" and they are vegetarians. They also wear badges as signs of their loyalty (**2 Thess. 2 : 3 - 4, 9**).

Hinduism: There is the belief God is present in all things. They believe in many or all gods. They also worship nature. They believe in penance which is the act of doing something to show that one is sorry for what he has done wrong. They also believe in reincarnation.

Buddhism: Members do not believe in the existence of God. They live a life of ascetism which is that of denying oneself of physical pleasures for religious reasons. They believe in nirvana which is the state of peace and happiness that a person achieves after giving up all personal desires. They take to a simple and strict way of living (**Ps. 14 : 1**).

Judaism : They are into Old Testament way of worship. They don't believe in Jesus Christ's deity. They worship in temples or synagogues and follow Old Testament laws and commandments (**Heb. 10 : 1**).

Atheus Society : Members do not believe in God's existence. They do not believe in creation; that neither the earth nor man was created. They propagate the doctrine of evolution. That the earth came into existence as a result of the accumulation of matter and that man evolved from animals. They equally believe that the earth would one day also come to an end by the process of disintegration of the matter that constitutes the earth. They don't believe in life after death and members are mostly scientists and philosophers (**Col. 2 : 8 - 9, 1 Tim. 6 : 20 - 21**).

Islam: They claim to worship God whom they refer to as Allah through prophet Mohammed. Mohammed was born in 520 AD. He came into contact with Jews and Christians when Christianity had taken on many of the trappings of developing Catholicism, including worship given to Mary. Through his contacts with Jews and Christians, he had a fractured knowledge of the two faiths. He tended to favour the patriarchal Jewish faith over the Christian faith because it seemed to him more compatible to the Arab mind than the Christian faith. They are legalistic, that is, they obey their laws very strictly (which are very much like O/T laws). They are also fatalistic, which is showing a belief in fate and feeling that you cannot control events or stop them from happening (Predestination). They believe in one God and practice polygamy. The Quran is read in public only in the Arabic language. Apart from the Quran, another body of religious literature was added to it as a supplement. This is Ahadith, which contains the sayings and actions of Mohammed. Lastly, they also believe in Jihad and in man's sensuous heaven (**John 14 : 6**).

Shintoism: They are into nature, ancestors and emperor worship. They also teach doctrine of faith healing and suicide (**Ezek. 47 : 12**). They don't have a clear-cut belief in life after death (**Rom. 1 : 24 - 25**).

Zoroastrianism: They believe in many gods. That there are two opposite principles in everything: For example, good and evil. That against right there is falsehood. Against life there is death. The good spirit is opposed by the bad spirit. Each human soul is a battleground between good and evil. Following death each soul will be judged at the Bridge

of the Separator. The record of each soul will be read and the soul will be placed on the balance between good deeds and bad deeds. If good deeds predominate, the soul will go to paradise. If bad deeds predominate, the soul will be thrown into the abyss below the bridge. They believe in life after death.

Confucianism: They don't believe in God. They are into ancestors worship. Confucianism decreed that parents and elders are to be both honoured and respected while they live. This sense of reverence for them continues into death and beyond. To them the soul must be assisted in its journey to the spirit world. For this reason elaborate rituals are enacted during their funerals. They practice morality, that religion is of the heart and are silent on the issue of life after death (*Acts 10 : 1 - 2*).

Freemason: They reject Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and His role in the salvation of mankind. They believe that a person will be saved and go to heaven as a result of his good works and personal self-improvement. They claim that the Bible is only one of several "volume of Sacred Law," all of which are deemed to be equally important. They believe that all religions are acceptable as long as they are calling on the name of the Almighty God. They teach that there is no exclusivity in Jesus Christ or the triune God who is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, therefore they reject the deity of Jesus Christ. It teaches that man is not sinful, just "*rude and imperfect by nature.*"

Traditional Religion: They believe in many gods and worship ancestors. They believe so much in the existence of a spirit world and an interaction between that world and that of the living.

Olumba Olumba Obu (OOO): He claims to be God himself

Godism and Jesus of Oyingbo: Believe in God but equate themselves with Jesus Christ.

Jehovah's Witnesses: Jehovah's Witnesses doctrines with reference to Jesus Christ include: There is only one Divine Being. There cannot exist a godhead or trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the trinity is foolishness created by Satan. There is no Son nor Holy Spirit. Jesus was the Archangel Michael, the first being created by Jehovah. When Jesus was on the earth, He was a perfect man, nothing more nor nothing less. He was not God in the flesh. After His death, Jesus not raised, but was conserved in a secret place or dissolved into gasses. Jesus is not the propitiation for sins, nor is He our mediator. This was a false doctrine promoted in the Middle Ages. Jesus must not be worshipped. The reign of Christ does not yet exist. It was not established on the Day of Pentecost. It was preached only after the year 1914. The millennial reign of Christ was to have its beginning in 1914. However, He did not accomplish this in 1914, so a new date was set in 1975, then in 1983 and 2000. Research is still being done to determine the precise date of His initiating the kingdom.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon): There are many gods. These gods have a physical body. They have sexual relations and give birth to children, who receive human bodies and come to the world. God is Adam, the Father of the human race. This father-god had a father, grandfather, and so on into infinity. Adam is God and Jesus is his Son by natural sexual process. When the Virgin Mary conceived Jesus, He was not conceived by the Holy Spirit, but by Adam. When a man, Jesus had several wives, such as Martha and Mary, Mary Magdalene and others. The Holy Spirit is nothing more than an ethereal substance. The Bible is not the total Word of God, and not even an accurate Word of God. They are not a sufficient guide for our salvation. New revelations are necessary. These come through the high priesthood of the church. The world continued under condemnation until the New Covenant, the Book of Mormon, was revealed. The Book of Mormon and the book, Doctrine and Covenant, are inspired of God and equal to, if not superior to, the Bible. The Book of Mormon was given and translated by divine guidance. Therefore, it is not subject to error. Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Belief in him is an indispensable article of faith. Every spirit that confesses Joseph Smith as prophet is of God. God is only a man, as us, but an exalted man. Through the Mormon system humans can become gods.

REJECTION OF CHRIST'S DEITY: As observed, some of the religions studied above deny or reject that Jesus Christ is the Son of God or that He is God Himself. They do not stop at anything to discredit, defame or ridicule Christ. They question His claim to being a God or Son of God. For instance, the AMORC wrote a book in which Jesus is said to have gone to Egypt to master the art of occult mysticism before starting His ministry. They claim He did that between the age of 12 and 30 years. They therefore attribute Jesus feat in performing miracles to this training in Egypt and not by any power and authority from His heavenly Father. They equally point to Christ pre-human existence as a proof of man's reincarnation.

LEANING ON BIBLICAL SCRIPTURES: Most of the religions discussed above rely on the popularity, spread and population of the Christian religion to gain acceptance, credibility or ingenuity. They do this by occasionally quoting from Bible scriptures to win the gullible persons as converts. Most of these scriptures are the statements made by Jesus Christ. Of course these scriptures are always quoted out of context and misinterpreted. In short they end up rewriting the scriptures in the process. Examples: **Matt. 6 : 33, John 4 : 24, Matt. 6 : 6, Matt. 13 : 10 - 11 (Deut. 29 : 29)**. They even cite John the Baptist as the reincarnation of Elijah (**John 1 : 19 - 21**).

CONCLUSION : A careful look at the activities of these religion organisations aside true Christianity shows that they are all about occultism, mysticism, spiritism and idolatry which the scriptures strongly warned against (**Exod. 22 : 18, Acts 19 : 18 - 20, Lev. 19 : 26, Lev. 19 : 31, Lev. 20 : 6, Lev. 20 : 7, Deut. 17 : 2 - 5, Gal. 3 : 16 - 21**). Their members therefore obviously have no place in everlasting life. Their portion is everlasting condemnation.