

**Chapter 26 of the 1689 Confession of Faith: “Of The Church”,
Session # 14, “Many Antichrists Have Come”, Presented by
Pastor Paul Rendall in the Adult Sunday School,
on March 25th, 2018.**

The 1689 Confession, Chapter 26: “Of the Church”

Paragraphs 3 and 4 will once again be our focus today –

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

(d) 1st Corinthians 5; Revelation 2-3; (e) Revelation 18: 2; 2nd Thessalonians 2: 11-12; (f) Matthew 16: 18;

Psalm 72: 17; 102: 28; Revelation 12: 17

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, (g)all power for the calling, institution, order for the government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is (h)that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

1st – All power for the calling, institution, order for the government of the church is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner in Christ.

A. Christ was given a Mediatorial kingdom by His Father, and He in turn bestowed a kingdom upon the apostles (and that kingdom is the New Testament Church)

You will recall that I have been speaking to you about the Kingdom and Church of our Lord Jesus Christ advancing in this present evil age. Christ is the Head of the Church.

Matthew 16: 16-18 – “And Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but My Father who is in heaven.’” “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades (Hell’s strategies which Satan initiates) shall not prevail against it.

We have looked at the reasons why Christ hath and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in Him. We saw from **Luke chapter 22, verses 29** that Jesus said that the Father had bestowed upon Him a kingdom. In accordance with the eternal purposes of God, Christ in eternity past was given this Mediatorial kingdom. Then, when our Lord Jesus Christ actually came into the world and fulfilled His ministry of righteousness, fulfilling the law of God, He laid down His life on the cross to purchase a people for God’s own possession. Then He rose from the dead, and what He promised to the apostles, He then gave them. He gave them authority to, by their word, lay the foundations for the truth that would be so instrumental in the building of the New Testament Church.

I hope that you will remember that I told that it was Christ's giving His apostles and His Church the Great Commission which would then become the basis for the Church's advancing to victory, in accordance with the purposes of God to overcome and defeat the strategies of Satan, and then eventually that the Kingdom of Christ will come to spiritually reign among the nations of the earth. This is what has been determined by God the Father.

Psalm 110, verse 1 – “The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand til I make Your enemies Your footstool.” “The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.” “Rule in the midst of Your enemies.”

Revelation chapter 5, verse 9 and 10 – “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us king and priests to our God; and we shall reign upon the earth.’”

B. The Pope of Rome cannot in any sense be the Head of the Church, but is that Antichrist, the Man of Sin, and son of perdition, who exalts himself in the Church.

I would like to further establish and develop this truth of what is the greatest hindrance to the spiritual reign of the Church among the nations of the earth. And that is the Antichrist, the man of sin, who as the Bible and our Confession states, “exalts himself” in the visible Church. I want to show you that the Antichrist claims to be the Head of the Church in Christ's place, and that he is the actual head of a false kingdom and false Church. The Antichrist is both a man and a successive line of men who have taken their place in the visible Church of God for more than 1200 years now. But this false system and false representative of Christ will not reign in the visible Church any longer than God ordains that it should be so. Let's begin at the beginning and learn how the Antichrist had his rise in the Church of God.

1st John chapter 2, verses 18-23.

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.” “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.” “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.” “I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.” “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?” “He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.” “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” “Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning.” “If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.”

Here we see John telling us that in his time many antichrists had come, and by this they knew that it was the last hour; that is, the last hour of apostolic time period of Church history. He says that they had heard that the Antichrist was coming, but that he had not yet come, but there were many antichrists; those who were against Christ, and who denied the truth of His Deity, and His Incarnation; His being sent by the Father. These false teachers we are told, had come among the true churches of Christ, and they went out from them because they were not of them. That is, they were not of them in true and Scriptural doctrine and practice. The anointing from

the Holy One, the discernment given by the Holy Spirit, to see what was true, in accordance with all the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures, and John's words to them in this letter, convinced them that they ought not to listen to them. They are called "antichrists" by John because they had denied the doctrine of the Trinity; that there is one God, and 3 Co-equal Persons subsisting in the Essence of God.

John Gill says on verse 22 – "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son: that denies the Father of Christ to be the Creator of the world, but asserts that it was made by angels, as some ancient heretics did; or that the Father of Christ is not the God of the Old Testament, as Marcion; or that denies that God is the Father of Christ, and that Christ is the Son of God; who will not allow that there is any such relation in nature between them; who affirm that Christ is only the Son of God by adoption, or because of his love to him, or because of his incarnation and resurrection from the dead; or that he is not his true and proper Son, only in a figurative and metaphorical sense; that he is not the natural and eternally begotten Son of God, only by office, and as Mediator, and that God is only his Father, as having installed him into an office; or he that denies that these two are distinct from each other, but affirms that Father is the Son, and the Son is the Father, and so confounds them both, and, by confounding both, denies that there are either Father or Son; and all such persons are antichrists, or opposers of Christ."

1st John 4: 1-3 – "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." "By this you know the Spirit of God: 'Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.'" "And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which have heard was coming and is now already in the world." (NKJV)

1st John 4: 2, 3 – New American Standard – "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world."

John tells believers in the early church, and even us today, that we are to test the spirits whether they are of God because some have said that Jesus Christ has not come in the flesh; and this is the spirit of the Antichrist.

Here John goes a step further than he did in chapter 2 and he says that not every spirit, not every teacher who claimed to be inspired of God, and claims to have the Spirit of God, really was of God. That is, if that person could not say Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, obeyed in the flesh, suffered in the flesh and died, then they would know he was not from God. They would also be able to conclude that this false teacher had not been born again by the Spirit of God and did not have saving faith in Christ, and therefore he was not called to be a teacher in the local church. By this they would know whether a person who claimed to be a prophet or teacher was true – If that person would confess that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh. His coming in the flesh meant that He, as God, had taken upon Himself a human nature, and in that nature He obeyed God's law fully and then He suffered and died for our sins upon the cross. It would include the truth that Jesus rose from the dead in that same body that He had suffered and died in, and that He afterwards ascended to heaven in His resurrected glorified body to sit at the Father's right hand. And this means that He is presently governing His Church as Head of the

Church, as the Son of Man glorified. He presently is ruling and reigning as Head over all things to His Church and He is the Ruler over all of the nations of the world.

I hope that you can see the connection with our study today on the subject of Antichrist. To deny that our Lord Jesus Christ was bodily raised from dead, is to deny that He is, as the Head of the Church, presently sitting at the right hand of God and ruling and reigning over His Church, as Head of the Church, and this is an integral part of what John means when he says that the spirit of Antichrist was already in the world in the days of the Apostles.