

The Pope is the Antichrist

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Bible Text: 1 John 2:18
Preached on: Sunday, May 21, 2017

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Good morning. There's a handout in your bulletin that you will find very useful and necessary for this sermon. Last week in our study of 1 John, we reviewed 1 John up to our current verse, which is 1 John 2:18 and that verse reads as follows, 1 John 2:18,

18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

And as we discussed this verse in 1 John 2:18, we looked at the fact that the last hour refers to the fact that we live in the time between Christ's first coming for salvation and his second coming for judgment, the last hour before all things are brought to consummation and their conclusion. And we also talked about what it means to refer to an antichrist or an antichrist and we said that it's anything that would rival or replace Jesus Christ, something that takes the place of Jesus or something that claims to be Jesus or something that opposes Jesus, anything or anyone that would rival or replace Jesus Christ. We looked at the fact that John is talking about this because there were false teachers in the church who were causing problems. They had left, the false teachers had left the church and the church was discouraged and confused after the fact, and John was letting them know that we can expect this to happen. We can expect conflict and falsehood to afflict the church as Satan attempts to distort the truth of Jesus Christ and to affect the church with the distortion of the truth. And we also saw that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Jesus openly triumphed over Satan. He openly triumphed over the devil. And so the best option for Satan to hurt and attack Jesus and his church is to pervert and distort the truth, to not just openly rival Jesus Christ, but to replace him with a false Jesus Christ, that is ideal because then people think they're worshipping Jesus, but they are not. And so the fact that there were false teachings and false teachers about Jesus in that church, John says, this proves to you that you're living in the last hour, the end of history before the final judgment. And then we concluded that sermon by asking questions, how can we prepare for the last hour? And the answer to that is by being on the Lord's side, by trusting in Jesus Christ, the great Judge. We also found that we can prepare for the last hour by doing a diligent search of our hearts and looking for anything in us that would rival or replace Jesus Christ, looking for idols in our hearts, looking for antichrists, which are idols in our lives. But there's an important part of 1 John 2:18 that we haven't addressed yet and so that is what we are going to do this morning.

John tells the church that there are little antichrists already in the world; there's already many of them, and the church has seen some of them in their midst. But John also says to them that antichrist, singular, is coming which would indicate a singular prominent figure and not just false teachers here and there. And you might have wondered last week, how are we to think of that statement? This is the word of God. How are we to understand it? And so that's the question that we're addressing this morning is the singular prominent figure that John refers to. Others of you may have had an even more specific question about this. If you recall, our Confession of Faith actually talks about this very issue and I'd like you to open your hymnals with me to page 684. Page 684 of your hymnals. After the hymns and before the indices, on page 684, in our Confession of Faith on chapter 26 regarding the church, if you look at paragraph 4, that's what we are going to reference. Chapter 26, paragraph 4, which is found on page 684 of your hymnal. It says this, this is paragraph 4.

"The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner [Jesus is King]; neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

That's a very specific doctrinal commitment, isn't it? Something that we need to take seriously in our Confession of Faith. It's one of those passages that many people today will say, "Oh, well, I believe the Confession, but I take exception to the part about the Pope and such things." It's very common for people to do that and I don't know exactly what the reasons are necessarily, so I won't comment on whether that's a good idea or not, but we need to take this seriously. The Scriptures say there is a singular antichrist figure. Our Confession of Faith identifies that figure as the Pope of Rome. Why would it say that? Why has that been often said by the church throughout the ages since the Reformation, and even before that actually? And how can we understand this claim?

And so that is where we're going to be giving our attention this morning, but to continue to sort of set the scene, there's another passage of Scripture that we need to look at, and that would be 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and as you're turning there, let me point out to you that in 1 John 2:18, John said that the Christians had heard about this. He was not announcing something new to them. They had heard that antichrist is coming. There was already a teaching among the apostles, a part of the apostolic doctrine given to the nations as the gospel went forth, included a warning about a singular antichrist figure, and though John just briefly references it, we can see a much more complete discussion of this in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 1 through 10 and so we're going to read those verses, and with all of that set up, then we can investigate the claim of whether the Pope of Rome matches the biblical description of the antichrist. 2 Thessalonians 2, verses 1 to 10.

1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

A quick note, the man of lawlessness is also translated man of sin, that's what's referenced in our confession, and the son of destruction is also translated son of perdition, which is the reference in our confession. Now, what does it say about this man of lawlessness, the son of destruction? What does he do?

4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Now we don't have time to sit on these verses and go through them in extensive detail and so I've summed up some of the points that they make and this is where you can see in the beginning of your handout where we will start.

Paul tells the church, as John did, that Christ's second coming is preceded by one who exalts himself in the church, denies any other gods, demands worship and devotion as God, and employs satanic deception and Paul says in 2 Thessalonians, "As I warned you when I was there, so now I write to you and warn you again," and John also says, "as you have heard, antichrist is coming." So this is an apostolic teaching from Paul and John and the other apostles to watch out for one who exalts himself in the church, denies other gods, demands worship as God, and employs satanic deception. Why, then, would the Protestant church identify the Pope as being this very figure, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the antichrist of antichrists? Well, you see, this is not just, "Hey, let's pour fire on our enemies or let's talk about how wrong everyone else is and how right we are." This is not that kind of sermon. This is 1 John 2:18, "Little children, you have heard that antichrist is coming," and I cannot preach this verse if I do not explain its meaning to you and so this is not, "Hey, let's just talk about everyone who's wrong and glorify ourselves who are right about things," this is taking very seriously the word of God and understanding it. If I don't do that, I'm skipping a portion of the Scriptures that Paul says, "You need to know about this," and John says, "You've heard about this, I'm reminding you of it." So we have a responsibility to watch for the man of sin, to watch for the son of

perdition, to watch for the antichrist of antichrists. And so I want to prove to you that the Pope is the antichrist from antichrist's own mouth, from the Catechism and official documents of the Roman Catholic Church. If Antichrist twists the truth, demands worship, takes the place of God in the church, those are the things we should look for, and you don't have to look very hard to find them in the official dogma and documents of Rome.

Now, sadly, we could spend several sermons going through the Catechism of Rome and pointing out all of its filth, but we don't have time to do that, and that's probably the last thing I would ever want to do to spend my time in this pulpit, but let me point to relevant portions of the Catechism of the Roman Catholic false church and bring out the criteria that the Scriptures use to mark antichrist. You'll notice as we proceed that the portions are footnoted. You can see where I got them, not from some random website or some random source, but from the Vatican's own website. These are quoted word for word from their own teachings, it's not my version of their teaching, it is their official dogma, their official teaching as their Church, and so I want to begin by looking at their position on Scripture and Tradition. The Roman Catholic Church's position on Scripture and Tradition and you can read along as I read a portion of their Catechism, which is marked number 81 on your handout. These are their words.

81. "Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit...and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching."

What does this mean? This means that God gave the church the Bible, which for Catholics contains the apocryphal books as well, and what they're saying is that the church has the Bible and then writes about the Bible, and as it writes about the doctrines of the Bible, it establishes a Tradition and it expands that Tradition over the span of the ages. So you have the written Scripture and then the written Tradition that they say explains and expounds the written Scripture. Now this is not immediately dangerous because all Christians should be concerned with the history of doctrine and the church's interpretation of the word of God throughout history. And so Tradition is important. It is important to reference and to understand and to consult and to study. The problem comes in the next paragraph, number 82,

82. "As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, 'does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.'"

What this means is that we do not consult the history of interpretation, we do not consult the Tradition of the church on a given doctrine, but you must receive and you must

adhere to it as having equal authority and equal coextensive truth with the very written word of God. So the authority of Tradition is equal to that of the written word, and it must be accepted in their language, accepted and honored with devotion and reverence; you revere and believe Tradition just as much as you do the word of God itself. Now, you have to realize what a gateway drug this is. If you accept the premise, if you start here with them, if you take the bait, you must believe and you must obey every single word ever taught by the Roman Catholic Church. All of it. You cannot pick and choose piecemeal. You must believe and you must obey its Tradition, which is its interpretation of the Scripture. What it says the Scriptures teach, what it says the Scriptures tell you to do, what they tell you to do, you must believe it, you must obey it because it carries equal authority from God.

Well, who's interpreting Scripture and Tradition? This leads us to the next section. Secondly, the Pope and the Magisterium. Not only is it a dangerous gateway drug to accept that you will believe and obey all Tradition, which interprets the Scriptures, but who are the ones in control of the Tradition? Who's guiding the Tradition of the Church through the ages? Paragraph number 85.

85. "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition [the people who get to teach these things], has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone."

The church in a live manner continues to interpret its own doctrine, the Scripture and Tradition.

"Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ."

Jesus tells you, you must believe this. Jesus tells you, you must do this.

"This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome."

Now let me explain to you what's going on here. The Bishops, in communion with the successor of Peter, that's the Pope, form the Magisterium. The Magisterium is a selection of the Bishops with the Pope as their head, who are the official teachers and interpreters of Scripture and Tradition, which are equally authoritative. So you have Scripture and Tradition, and then you have the Magisterium, the Bishops, with the Pope as the head of the Magisterium, who authoritatively declare to the Church in a live way all that it must believe and do. So whatever the Pope says the word of God says, you must believe it. Whatever the Pope says the word of God teaches, you must obey it, and that includes Scripture and Tradition equally authoritative. If the Pope refers to Tradition and says that's what Tradition means and that's what Tradition commands, you obey it and believe it with just as much reverence and adoration as you would the very written word of God. So you have the Pope over the Magisterium over Scripture and Tradition.

Now if this isn't clear enough, it gets worse. Not only do the Pope and the Bishops have the only authority to interpret Scripture and Tradition, but they also have infallibility. They cannot be wrong. It is not possible for them to be wrong. In a live way, they continue to interpret Scripture and Tradition, and they can't mess up. They cannot commit any error. When they gather as the Magisterium, when they pronounce a matter to be believed or obeyed, they cannot fall into error, and if they cannot fall into error, that means that you cannot question them and you must believe and obey everything that they hand down to you because number one, you don't have the right to interpret Scripture and Tradition. You don't have the authority to interpret Scripture and Tradition. You must not do that. You must believe and receive everything that they tell you because they can't get it wrong. Paragraph 889.

889. "In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her a share in his own infallibility. By a 'supernatural sense of faith' the People of God, under the guidance of the Church's living Magisterium, 'unfailingly adheres to this faith.'"

So the Magisterium who exercises authority in the name of Christ, that was the previous paragraph, they now come to you with the infallibility of Jesus Christ, and the Church is to unfailingly receive and adhere to that teaching.

Now, is the infallibility something that you and I would possess as members of the Roman Catholic Church if we were? Does the whole Church possess this infallibility? No. Paragraph 891. Who's the real infallible one who shares in the infallibility of Christ and infallibly guides the Church in the name of Jesus Christ?

891. "The Roman Pontiff [that's the Pope], head of the college of bishops [remember he's head of the Magisterium], enjoys this infallibility [Christ's infallibility] in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful - who confirms his brethren in the faith he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals...the infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium, above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine 'for belief as being divinely revealed,' and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions 'must be adhered to with the obedience of faith.' This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself."

You see what's happening here. The Pope is the head of the college of bishops, he's the head of the Magisterium, and he's thus chief of the Church. Their language is this, "supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful," because he has the infallibility and it extends he infallibly interprets the Scriptures and Tradition. He cannot go wrong when as Pope, as the head of the Magisterium, he declares something to be believed and something to be obeyed. And how are you to respond if you are a member of the Roman

Catholic Church? Your response is there. As the teaching of Christ, the definitions must be adhered to with the obedience of faith. What they define as being true, what they define as being obligatory, you must believe and you must obey, the obedience of faith. You are not to question it, you are not to disbelieve it, you are not to disobey it.

Now, one way in which Protestants sometimes misrepresent this is Protestants think that Roman Catholics claim that the Pope is infallible in anything and everything that he ever said. That's not what they're claiming, not that we're in any way giving them the pass. What they're claiming is that when the Pope says this is something for the Church to be believed or this is something for the Church to obey, he will be infallible. That is what they are claiming, which is just as bad as it would be if everything he said were infallible. It's just slightly less absurd.

Now remember, brothers and sisters, that we're not making things up. This is not our carefully crafted version, our straw man to be knocked over. We are reading the direct dogma of the Roman Catholic Church from its own official Vatican website. And you can already see now that if you're in that Church, you must believe and obey everything that they tell you and it all comes from the Pope who shares in the infallibility of Christ and speaks in the name of Christ.

Thirdly, the identity and authority of the Pope. The identity and authority of the Pope. We've already spelled this out in some detail, but I want to add to what we've already seen, and I'm calling this point the identity and authority of the Pope because we have to understand that there is no Roman Catholic Church without the Pope. It doesn't exist. If you don't have the Pope, you don't have a Roman Catholic Church. You can't have a Roman Catholic Church without the Pope. How so? Paragraph number 22,

22. "The college or body of bishops [the Magisterium] has no authority unless it is understood together with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter as its head. The pope's power of primacy over all, both pastors and faithful, remains whole and intact. In virtue of his office, that is as Vicar of Christ and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church. And he is always free to exercise this power."

What it's saying is that the Magisterium, the College of Bishops, which is the live teaching office of the Church, they can't teach the church unless they have the Pope with them to say, "Yes, this is the truth. Yes, this is what Scripture says. Yes, this is what Tradition teaches." They can't do it on their own. They have to have the Pope in concert with them. The Pope has to lead the Magisterium or it has no authority. The Magisterium cannot tell you what to believe or what to do unless the Pope is behind it. Why is that? Because the Pope is the Vicar of Christ. Now, a vicar is not a word that we're very familiar with. It's a word that I always heard growing up watching Thomas the Tank Engine. "Oh, we're going to pick up the vicar today," you know, something like that. It's a term that we often hear in Anglicanism. What's a vicar? I'm not referring to the Anglican idea. A vicar is someone who stands in place of another. We often talk about vicarious

atonement. Jesus died in our place. The atonement that he rendered with his blood was vicarious in our place. He was a vicar, a vicar for us. And so the Roman Catholic Church calls the Pope the Vicar of Christ. He is in the place of Jesus Christ on earth. He is Christ's representative on the earth, the Vicar of Christ in the church. He occupies his place visibly on the earth as pastor of the whole Church. The Pope is Jesus Christ on earth. That's why he's pastor of the whole Church. That's why he has supreme universal power over it, because he claims to stand in Jesus' place on the globe.

But what if you don't want to accept the Pope as your supreme head and pastor, which is their language? You don't get to make a choice. You join the Pope or you're excommunicated. It's all or nothing. And given that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true Church, you cannot know the truth or believe the truth or obtain salvation or receive any grace at all without bowing to the Pope, if you grant their premises because for them, outside of their Church, there are no other true churches. There is one holy Roman Catholic Church, they would say. And so outside of that, there cannot be any authoritative teaching on doctrine or morals. There can be no dispensing of grace. There can be no salvation. And so unless you submit yourself to the Pope, you lose everything. You're excommunicated from the Church. You are going to hell. It is the Pope or nope. Why? How do you know the stakes are so high? Paragraph number 23,

23. "The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity of both the bishops and of the faithful."

The visible principle and foundation of unity for the bishops and the faithful. The teaching Magisterium does not exist without the Pope. The faithful, the people do not exist without the Pope because they are united in him. He is their unity. The Church is one in the Pope because they all submit to his infallibility as Vicar of Christ. And so if you say, "No, I will not follow the Pope," you're saying no to everything. You're saying no to the entire system. That is why you cannot join the Roman Catholic Church without accepting all of its dogma, all of its teaching, all of its morals, everything from the least to the greatest point in the whole entire vast corpus or body of their teaching. There's no union with Rome apart from the Pope. There's no communion with Rome apart from the Pope. The people are nothing without him. The bishops are nothing without him. He is the head. They are the body. Do not be deceived. However much people may say otherwise, there is no true union or communion with Rome without acknowledging the Pope as your supreme head and pastor and pledging to render the obedience of faith to all that the Pope and the Popes have handed down and will hand down as the doctrine and morals of the Church in the name of Jesus Christ with the infallibility of Jesus Christ and the authority of Jesus Christ. If you do not believe what they tell you to believe and if you do not do what they tell you to do, you are not rendering the obedience of faith, and if you are not rendering the obedience of faith, you are in rebellion against the Church, against the Vicar of Christ, and you cannot have communion with it.

Now, there's a lot of inconsistency in the Roman Catholic Church. We probably know quite a few people who would say, "Well, it doesn't really work like that." Well, it may

not really work like that, but that's what it is. These are their teachings. Brothers and sisters, the Scriptures warn us of a singular figure who exalts himself in the church of Jesus Christ, who takes the place of Jesus Christ, who says there are no other gods, who, in other words, tries to contain himself within the Christian religion, and who demands devotion and obedience through satanic deception. It also says that this is something that continues until Christ returns to fully expose and destroy this figure, which means it's not just one person, but it is a successive line of persons. The successive Popes of Rome are the antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, who by satanic deception have claimed to be God and have exalted themselves in the temple of God, denouncing all others, demanding belief, demanding obedience to the eternal ruin of how many thousands and millions.

This cannot go unnoticed. This cannot go unannounced. This cannot go unopposed. We have to be careful not to be overly polemical and not to devour the church from within with unnecessary and incessant argument and debate, but the very point here is that the Roman Catholic Church is not the church of Jesus Christ. It is the Church of antichrist. It is the Church of the Pope, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, who rivals and replaces Jesus Christ. What is more satanic than this, brothers and sisters? Satan from the beginning said to Eve, "Has God really said," and he continues to say that through the Popes with their Scripture and Tradition and the Magisterium with the Pope at its head. Satan corrupted and distorted the word of God so that Eve believed something different, thinking it to be true. Have not the Popes taken for themselves the supreme right of defining and declaring God's word without the possibility of error and without the possibility of being questioned? You cannot question them. They can't be wrong, and we have not even discussed at all how Rome has destroyed and corrupted the pure gospel of free salvation in Jesus Christ. We've barely touched the surface of the filth of Rome's errors. Now, I want something to be clear: there are many in the Roman Catholic cult who live in great error and who despite the lies of Rome cling to Christ and not the Pope for their salvation, and so they live in great confusion and error, but their dying hope is Jesus Christ and they are true Christians. But there are just as many who defend and believe and stand on and stand for these very lies.

Now, I included a fourth point on the cult of Mary just for your own reference, not because I intend to go into it in detail. So, in addition to what we have covered, we haven't covered the cult of Mary, the number and the efficacy of the sacraments, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the doctrine of purgatory, the doctrine of the saints and their intercession, and so much more. The point here has been this, brethren, it is the last hour and you have heard that antichrist is coming. Many antichrists have come, but there is one exalted in the temple of God. There is one who claims to be God. There is one who demands absolute obedience and belief to the exclusion of all others. There is one who makes himself the source of unity. There is one who distorts and corrupts and twists and conceals the word of God. There's only one. We might think, "Yes, but if antichrist will not be unveiled till the end, how can we identify him now?" But realize that Paul and John told Christians, "Watch out, you can identify this. It can be seen. He can be identified when he arises." What will not happen until the end is that his deception will not be fully unmasked until the end. Some will see through his deceit for now, but not all

until the time when he is completely unmasked and people realize just what a devil he truly is.

Who has exalted himself in the temple of God more than the Pope? Who has distorted the gospel more than the Pope? Who has claimed the place of Jesus Christ more than the Pope? Who has taught with the authority of Christ more than the Pope? Brothers and sisters, thank God for the Reformation. Thank God for Protestantism. The early Reformers stayed in the Roman Catholic Church as long as they possibly could to try to reform it. They attempted to reform the Church. When Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, they were not a fully developed Reformation theology. They were questions. They were Theses for academic discussion. He was trying to initiate self-reflection and self-criticism in the Church. "Given that the word of God says this, how are we to understand these things," was Luther's intent, and that developed and grew as people started to actually look at the word of God and to reconsider the doctrines of the Catholic Church. So the Reformation, the protest against Rome began as an intra-ecclesial within the church reformation movement and the Reformers were pushed out of the Roman Catholic Church by fire and martyrdom. They were repelled. They were repulsed. They attempted to correct it and restore it and in so doing, as Rome pushed them out, the true and pure gospel of Jesus Christ was freed from antichristian error and deceit and we live in that freedom to this very day. There's much more that we could say about that.

Now, one thing that I haven't brought attention to is that in the footnotes I've also included pertinent sections of our Confession of Faith that are explicitly Protestant or explicitly anti-Catholic in their statements, and so I would encourage you to look at those as well. There's statements against implicit faith, the obedience of faith. There are statements against the Pope as the head of the church. There are statements against Tradition as being authoritative. There are statements in favor of the word of God validating its own authority, not needing the church or any person to tell us to believe the word of God. It tells us itself. It also reduces the body of revelation to the written word itself. And these are just a few. The chapter on justification has a lot against Rome. The chapter on Christ the mediator has a lot against Rome. The chapter on good works, the chapter on the law, All sorts of chapters in our Confession have explicitly Protestant or explicitly anti-Catholic teachings. Why? Why would they be so anti-Catholic? Why would they say these things in such a clearly opposite form? It's because they believed and were convinced according to the Scriptures that the Roman Church had become an apostate Church under the guidance of antichrist, the Popes.

The influence of Rome remains strong today. It may not have the political influence that it once did, but the antichrist's agenda all along has not been to control necessarily the nations per se, but to control the church and the Pope continues to exercise supreme authority over how many countless Roman Catholics. Rome remains strong today. How much of the Spanish-speaking world is overrun and dominated by Roman Catholicism mixed with local folklore and traditions? how much of Italy and Poland and many other countries have long lain under the deceitful oppression of antichrist? My own heritage, Ireland, Renihan is an Irish name like Monahan and Callahan and those other names, how

much of Ireland still lays under the oppression of Rome? My family came to the United States in 1914 from Holy Cross in Ireland in Tipperary. Holy Cross has relics, bits of the cross in it, that's why it's called Holy Cross in the abbey there. The whole country is full of the filth of Roman Catholicism. There was one place that had the stations of the cross as they use them in their devotion, and the station that showed Jesus carrying his cross, the face had been intentionally changed to be Pope John Paul II. It wasn't me saying, "That looks like John Paul," it was John Paul II's face as Jesus carrying the cross.

On occasion I watch the Spanish speaking channels just to listen to the Spanish because it's useful and helpful and La Virgen de Guadalupe, all sorts of saints and idols are so intermixed into the Mexican culture and the Latino culture, and they have shrines to them. The point being, the world still languishes, much of the world who thinks they're serving God, who thinks they're loving Jesus Christ, they languish under the slavery of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church which is why it is important when we come to this verse, 1 John 2:18, to expose it and it's not difficult to expose when you read their own words. And the good news that we can bring to Roman Catholics is that Jesus Christ, as one perfect priest with one perfect sacrifice, has forgiven all our sins once and for all, and we obtain his salvation by faith as an instrument, by faith as open hands receiving, not by progressive works of gaining and obtaining grace, but by receiving once for all justification, our sins being forgiven and we receiving the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Luther rejoiced. That's why I said, I think it was last week that in his commentary in Galatians, he put in the margin, the doctrine of justification is to be continually beaten into our heads. Luther's the most Protestant person ever. He knows this. He says we need this.

Jesus freed us from tyranny. He freed us from the tyranny of sin. He freed us from the tyranny of false doctrines and false commandments. And so brethren, I urge you to prize, prize the word of God. Consider it important and precious and special to you because it frees you. When I preach to you I do not say believe it because I said it. I do not appeal to my authority to persuade your belief. All I can do is say "thus says the Lord" according to his word and you like Bereans are to compare diligently that which I say with the Scriptures so that your faith rests in God and not in me because God has freed you from the traditions and teachings of men. Prize the word of God, prize the word of Christ, prize the true church of Christ. Prize the price of truth paid willingly by generations before you so that you could see more clearly the lies and falsehoods of Rome.

And though we've not discussed it today in detail, prize the doctrine of justification by faith. Our sins are forgiven. We receive full and complete righteousness from Jesus Christ by faith in him. We rest in his finished work. We receive his finished work freely by God's grace. Freely, laying hold of Christ by faith, faith that reaches out and grasps his greatness and his graciousness. All who believe in the name of the Son of God, all who trust in Jesus Christ are saved from their sins and as a result, they are united to their head. They are his body. They are the church. They are his people. And he is to be exalted and praised and believed and obeyed to the exclusion and to the opposition of all antichrists, be they little or the great one. May Jesus Christ alone be praised. Amen.

Let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we have no boast of being correct. We have no boast of any exclusive claim on the truth. We have no boast of achieving salvation. We give all glory, all honor, all praise, all adoration to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and we rest in your truth and we rejoice in your salvation. O Father, how we pray that you would use us to be a consistent and faithful witness of the true and pure gospel of free grace and salvation. Jesus Christ, build your church to the destruction of Rome and the antichrist. Return and expose and destroy him. Free those slaves who languish under a false gospel. May they look to you and not to Mary. May they look to you and not to the saints. May they look to you and not to the Pope. May they look to you and not to any priest. May they look to you and not to any Bishop. May they look to your word and not to any tradition as authoritative. Jesus, work mightily to undo the deceit of antichrist. Work mightily through your word, Holy Spirit, accompany the word, and with power and with conviction, free all those who sit in the darkness of Rome's deceit and error. We pray that we would be ever humble, ever thankful, and yet ever convicted and ever ready to defend and proclaim the truth. We thank you, Jesus, that your church will never be extinguished, that the gates of hell will not prevail as you advance upon them. We thank you that you are sovereign in guiding all things, that you are openly victorious over Satan. And so we pray that you would cause our eyes to be open to his wiles and his deceitfulness, that we might see him at work not just in the false Church, but also in the world around us. We pray that you would please deliver us from the evil one, that you might deliver us from temptation, that you would help us to overcome error in our lives, whether it be error in truth or error in morals, that we might believe and obey the truth and the truth alone. O God, our Father, O God, the Son, O God, Holy Spirit, work mightily for your glory in our lives. We pray this in the name of Jesus to you, our Father, and by the Holy Spirit. Amen.

1 John 2:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10

The Day of the Lord is preceded by one who:

- Exalts himself in the church,
- Denies any other gods,
- Demands worship and devotion as God,
- Employs Satanic deception.

Paul warned churches to watch for this.

1. *Scripture and Tradition*

81 “Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit...and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching.”

82 “As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, ‘does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.’”¹

2. *The Pope and the Magisterium*

85 “‘The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised *in the name of Jesus Christ*.’ This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops *in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome*.”²

889 “In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, *Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her a share in his own infallibility*. By a ‘supernatural sense of faith’ the People of God, under the guidance of the Church’s living Magisterium, ‘unfailingly adheres to this faith.’”

891 “*The Roman Pontiff*, head of the college of bishops, *enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful* - who confirms his brethren in the

¹ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_PL.HTM

2LCF 1.1 The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

1.4 The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, depends not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

1.6 The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

² http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c2a2.htm

faith *he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals*...the infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter’s successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium,’ above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine ‘for belief as being divinely revealed,’ and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions ‘*must be adhered to with the obedience of faith*.’ *This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself*.”³

3. *The Identity and Authority of the Pope*

22. “The college or body of bishops has no authority unless it is understood together with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter as its head. *The pope’s power of primacy over all, both pastors and faithful, remains whole and intact*. In virtue of his office, that is as *Vicar of Christ and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church*. And he is always free to exercise this power.”

23. “The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity of both the bishops and of the faithful.”⁴

4. *The Cult of Mary*

971 “The Church’s devotion⁵ to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship. The Church rightly honors ‘the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of ‘Mother of God,’ to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs...This very special devotion...differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration. The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an ‘epitome of the whole Gospel,’ express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.”

966 “Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things,⁶ so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death.” The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son’s Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians.”⁷

³ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c2a2.htm

2LCF 21.2 God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and *the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also*.

⁴ http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

2LCF 26.4 The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order or 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 that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

⁵ What is rendered “devotion” here is translated in other languages as “worship” or “cult.”

⁶ In the Latin, this is “Regina universorum,” meaning “Queen of the universe” or “Queen of the heavens.”

⁷ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p123a9p6.htm