

1988 Talk Back Catholicism Radio Debate

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Host:

World attention was focused on the European Parliament earlier this week when the Northern Ireland MEP and leader of the DUP Ian Paisley denounced Pope John Paul II as the antichrist just as the pope began to make his address to the parliament, an address which looked forward to increased European unity in 1992.

The moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Dr. Godfrey Brown stated earlier this year that there is no scriptural evidence for the Westminster Confession of Faith statement that the pope is the antichrist. But members of the Free Presbyterian Church, however, are still bound to regard the pope as antichrist.

Well, the Reverend Ian Paisley who is also, of course, the moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church has addressed himself to the issue and has published an exposition called simply *Antichrist* which he claims demonstrates from Scripture, history and the pope's own lips why the pope is the antichrist.

Well, he is with me in the studio to discuss the issue. And also with me is John Bach who is also a theologian. John Bach, irrespective of the manner in which the evidence is presented by Ian Paisley in this book, can we address the central argument. Is his argument simply a wrong one?

Bach:

I think it is a dated one. Of course the book claims to be by Ian R.K. Paisley on the cover. In fact, it is a rehash of a work produced in the last century by a man who had the amazing title of Lecturer in Popery at some protestant institute. But in the book I find, for example, that the pope invented sin, taught sin, enacted sin, trades in sin and is the incarnation of sin. And I have to say that I do find that really rather offensive as I believe many Roman Catholics will. And I note that the present Anglo-Irish agreement which is designed—as far as I can make out—to give comfort and succor to Roman Catholics who may feel they are being treated badly in the North, well, it isn't doing much to counter that. I believe that many Roman Catholic people will be hurt. And I must say with the greatest of respect that my study of this book—which, incidentally is made up of short

chapters of no more than three pages each—is an amalgam of ignorance and offensiveness.

Host:

Well, Ian Paisley, you have written the book. You obviously are firmly convinced of the arguments and that was demonstrated at the European Parliament earlier this week. What do you say to that?

Paisley:

Well, first of all, the book makes it perfectly clear that this is a *précis* of Dr. J. A. Wylie's classic *The Papacy is the Antichrist*. It makes that absolutely clear.

Bach:

But you are on the front cover.

Paisley:

Yes, well, it is an exposition by me because if Mr. Bach had read the introduction he would have seen that there is also other material which was not from Dr. Wylie's book.

Dr. Wylie is a well known historian. His *History of Protestantism* is a basic work and is honored by all historians, even those who disagree with his proposition. So to say that because he lectured in popery in a very important institute in Edinburgh which was connected with the three main Presbyterian bodies in Edinburgh, is that this man was someone to be reviled or rejected. That doesn't really stand up.

But that, of course, is not the argument because I am reminded of Lloyd George being in a tough political fight in Wales. And he was addressing a packed schoolroom of supporters and suddenly through the window there came a stone. And the politician stopped and lifted up the stone and he said, "I don't need to argue anymore. I have won the argument," because if you are not going to deal with basics and you are only going to attack the people that put forward propositions, you are not coming to the argument.

Bach:

Well, not just a minute...

Paisley:

Let me come, then, to what Mr. Bach said. He said he didn't like what was said that the pope invented sin. But it is a fact as Mr. Bach studied the volumes that the Church of Rome has issued concerning what is venial sin and what is mortal sin. They have defined

sin. They not only have defined sin, but they have actually said that certain things are sin, which—according to the Scriptures—are not sin.

For example, take the worship of images. The Church of Rome holds that a special worship should be given to images. The Bible holds the very opposite and says, “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.”¹ So when this book says the pope invented sin—and Wylie says that—he is speaking the truth.

Bach:

I don't know what you are saying... But that may come...

Host:

What you are saying is...it is important to get this...to take it point by point. What you said is the Catholic Church has defined sin. Now, there is a big difference between defining something and inventing it.

Bach:

But it is not only them...

Paisley:

To call... Just a minute or two. To call something a sin that is not a sin is inventing a sin.

Bach:

But what about the pope being the incarnation of sin of being devious and diabolical.

Paisley:

That may...

Bach:

What about the suggestion that the pope is a greater sinner than Judas Iscariot? That is deeply offensive to Roman Catholic people.

Paisley:

Let me say this that in the historical...and let's get back. I notice Mr. Bach said it was a dated edition, but that may...this is exactly what I am seeking to establish because when one says today that the pope is the antichrist hands are raised in this ecumenical age of fudge and people say, “Oh, that shouldn't be said.” Mr. Bach belongs to the Church of

¹ Exodus 20:5

Ireland. The Irish Articles of 1615 put it clearly that the bishop of Rome is so far from being the supreme head of the universal Church of Christ that his works and doctrine do plainly discover him to be that man of sin foretold in the Holy Scriptures whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and abolish with the brightness of his coming.

Now, no doubt that may be offensive to Roman Catholics. There are things in the Bible that are offensive to all sinners, but we have to accept them. That is the plain teaching, historically, of the Anglican Church in Ireland. As Mr. Bach very well knows the Presbyterian Confession of Faith by Mr. Brown, Dr. Brown, may say we don't accept it, but when he was ordained to the ministry he was asked did he accept it and would he sign it as a confession of his own faith and he did sign it as a confession of his own faith. The Savoy Confession of the Congregational Church makes the same statement. The old Baptist Confession of 1688 and John Wesley in his notes on the New Testament.

So I am contending for nothing more or nothing less than what was stated by the reformed creeds of Protestant Christendom.

Host:

John Bach, I mean, is that the official position of the Anglican Church in Ireland? Because if it is Ian Paisley's argument would seem to hold a good deal of water.

Bach:

Ian Paisley is quite correct to say these are important historical formularies. They were written at the time of the Protestant Reformation when there was a lot of persecution and martyrdom. And the real issue is whether these dated statements apply to the 20th century. And the assumption behind Ian Paisley's argument is that the Roman Catholic Church has not changed at all. And I think that is where the real intellectual debate must begin.

There was a time when Roman Catholics would have absolutely nothing to do with Protestants at all. Mercifully that has changed. And, as Mr. Paisley surely will know, there has recently been a defection from the papacy of a right wing theologian called Archbishop Lefevre who wants to go back to those days, the assumption being that the Vatican has changed. And I really don't see any purpose in resurrecting bitter, horrible days which we should really put behind us and instead try and rediscover what love and forgiveness are because these are pretty fundamental Christian ideals.

Paisley:

Let me say that we are dealing here with a biblical doctrine. This doctrine, set forth in the historic creeds of Christendom and in the formulas of the Reformation churches was based upon the Scriptures. Now, the Scriptures make it clear that such an antichrist would arise. We have the prophecies of Daniel, we have the prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the prophecies of the apostle Paul and the prophecies of the apostle John.

And the apostle Paul has said there are certain marks that are going to distinguish the antichrist. And it is these marks that this book is considering.

This book says from the very beginning it demonstrates from Scripture, from history and from his own lips. Now the papacy has not changed. The papacy said in Vatican II that there would be no departure from the doctrine of the Council of Trent. That is written into their documents. I debated that with a Jesuit priest at Queens University, Father Corbesly. As you know that was the basis of our debate.

The pope of Rome claims to be another Christ on earth. And when he was crowned as the pontiff he was set up above the throne and the cardinals came and kissed his feet. And we have explained in this book the whole ceremony of his coronation and what it means. And what is more, I have the 100 texts of T.C. Hammond of [?] Church Missions which is a Church of Ireland organization as Mr. Bach knows. And they repeat what Pope Pius IX said, "I alone, despite my unworthiness, am the successor of the apostles, the vicar of Christ. I alone have the mission to guide and direct the bark of Peter. I am the way, the truth and the life. They who are with me are with the Church. And they who are not with me are out of the Church. They are out of the way, the truth and the life."

Now, there is no difference between that and the present claims of the papacy. And this is the issue that we should be addressing ourselves to.

If Mr. Bach can show me something in any document from Rome... I have studied every document that has been issued by the Vatican very carefully, even the one on ecumenism. And he knows perfectly well that the old human sanctum creed is still underlined in that document that they alone are the true Church. And while others may be in some way seeking the truth, the truth is in us and in us alone.

Host:

John?

Bach:

Well, that kind of monopoly position of Rome is one which clearly as a Protestant I don't accept. But I think the important thing is neither do liberally minded Roman Catholics. And we have got to recognize that things have changed.

Now I am interested in what Ian Paisley says about antichrist in Scripture. Now, I can debate this until the cows come home. And if you look, for example, at the book of Daniel—to which this book alludes a great deal—the fact is that book was written at a time when a man called Antiochus Epiphanes was busy attacking Jerusalem, forbidding Jewish customs upon the pain of death. And this apocalyptic—that is the technical name—this apocalyptic literature was a way of saying, "Don't believe any of all this. Our cause is victorious." Exactly the same applies in the book of Revelation which was written at a time of massive persecution by the Roman Empire.

Now, to take those statements which quite plainly were addressed to historic figures—Antiochus Epiphanes and the Emperor Domitian—and to say somehow they apply to the papacy in the 1980s, I have to say, is a far fetched and not a sound exegesis of Scripture.

Paisley

Well, I think it is amazing to hear Mr. Bach make that statement about the book of Daniel. For the book of Daniel prophecies about four kingdoms or four world empires that were going to come. Daniel was not dealing with the present situation at all. He was dealing with a situation that was yet to come. And anyone that reads the book will remember the great dream of the massive image with the head of gold, the breast of silver, the loins of brass and the legs of iron and the toes part of iron and part of clay. And Daniel prophesied clearly that there was four great world empires going to arise. There was the one at present, “Thou, oh king, art that head of gold.” And he was referring there to the dynasty of the Babylonian Empire. Secondly, after Babylon came the Persian Empire. After the Medo-Persian Empire came the Greek Empire. After the Greek Empire came the Roman Empire which divided to East and West. And after that came the Holy Roman Empire, the 10 toes of the great figure. So Daniel was dealing with future.

And don't worry about...

Bach:

So a fortune teller you think.

Paisley:

He wasn't a fortune teller. He was telling the future. Christ told the future. We are not dealing with fortune telling. We are dealing with heavenly prophecies which all came true.

Who was to know there was going to be four world empires? Who was to know that these things were going to happen, that Rome was going to divide in two? Who was to know that?

Bach:

You're not arguing with me, but with every scholarly book that has ever been written about Daniel and Revelation.

Let me take you to another...

Paisley:

All right, now, then, just let me...just a minute or a two. There are some of the greatest scholars even living expound that. And they take this view that I am putting forward.

What about professor Dick Wilson of Princeton who was one of the greatest scholars of his day? And they write these people off and say, "Because you believe in the Bible and you believe that the Bible can tell you something that is going to happen in the future..." That is one of the tests that it is the Word of God. God knows what is going to happen in the future.

Host:

John said...

Paisley:

So don't think that John should just write everybody off.

Bach:

Well, neither should you.

Paisley:

I am not...I am not prepared to write anybody off. I am prepared to say I have established an historic view and I am now seeking to defend it.

Bach:

Now let me take, if I may, another biblical view because it is important we go back to basic principles. In the New Testament you have the idea of the antichrist being the person who denies that Jesus has come in the flesh. That is to say, the antichrist being the denier of the incarnation.

Now in this book by Mr. Wylie rehashed by you there is the suggestion that the Roman Catholic Church doesn't believe in the incarnation and that is surely rather far fetched, isn't it?

Paisley:

I think that if Mr. Bach read the book properly he would understand that the book is dealing with the doctrines of the New Testament and putting over against those doctrines of the New Testament the doctrines of the Church of Rome. Every doctrine of Christianity has been taken by the Church of Rome and has been twisted and distorted by the Church of Rome.

For instance, the Church of Rome's religion is not today the religion of the Father. It is the religion of the mother. And the pope himself claims to be the Holy Father. But the Bible says we are not to call—in a spiritual sense—any man Father because one is your father² and the title Holy Father is given alone in the New Testament to God the Father.³

Now, you take the incarnation. Let's come to the incarnation.

Bach:

Why does the apostle John refer to us as his children?

Paisley:

I believe...I believe in the incarnation and I believe in the virgin birth. I don't know whether Mr. Bach does or not. But I happen to do. And I would like to say to him he knows perfectly well that the Church of Rome takes a different view of Mary than the Reformed and Reformation faith take of Mary. Mary was not immaculately conceived. She was not without sin. In fact she said, "I rejoice in God my Savior."⁴

That is what we are trying to say, that their view of the incarnation and their view of the virgin birth is entirely different from the view that we would take. And we are entitled to do that. That is from her own books. But let's look at the claims of the pope of Rome. Let's look at this. Let's take the ceremony of his...and here is, perhaps...John Bach would like to dissociate himself from this, too. This is one of the famous bishops of his [?] church...

Bach:

Pretty dated [?]

Paisley:

...bishop Christopher Wordsworth.

Bach:

The cover is coming off of it.

Paisley:

It is not...the cover is not...The cover is perfect.

[multiple voices]

² See Matthew 23:9

³ See John 17:11

⁴ Luke 1:47

Paisley:

If that is the only argument you can put, John, you are very short.

[multiple voices]

Bach:

It is dated stuff and you know perfectly well.

Host:

Could I come in here?

Paisley:

No, but wait a minute...

Host:

[multiple voices]

Paisley:

...or Lincoln.

Host:

Right.

Paisley:

And he also gives the full ceremony of the crowning of the pope.

Host:

Well, we don't want the full ceremony.

Paisley:

Now, here is what I am saying. "Take the tiara adorned with the triple crown and know that thou art the father of princes and of kings and the governor of the world."

Now, that is what the Bible was talking about.

Host:

I am not a theologian and I am no bibliophile, but what I want to ask you as someone who is neither of those two, why does it matter...why should it matter to me whether or not the pope is the antichrist. That is what I don't understand.

Paisley:

Well, I can answer that very well. The Bible has warned us about what the antichrist is going to do, that he is going to deceive people. And that is exactly what the pope is doing. One of the deceptions of Rome has been exposed today, the fake of the Turin shroud. And he has deceived the people. And we have seen that on every hand, the deceptions. The pope is not the Holy Father. There is only one Holy Father. He is not the representative of God on earth. He is not, as the bishops of Ireland said in 49, "another Christ." He is not that. He is...

Bach:

No, of course he is not.

Paisley:

No, he is not that. He is not. And the man who claims to be that...these are the claims of the pope. I didn't say that the pope...that I said the pope said...These are the official claims of the pope.

Well, if a man comes and claims these things and he is not these things and I read the Scripture that a man will come and he will say these things and he will emphasize that and the Bible warns us against that.

Bach:

Well, of course this idea of some evil figure who is going to come in the future...some people have tried to take that out of Daniel and Revelation and not to take these books in their proper context and of course it is not just the pope who has been accused. Over the course of the centuries people thought it all referred to Napoleon or Hitler or Stalin. And I believe that is every bit as ridiculous as saying it refers to the papacy.

Now of course there is such a thing as evil. Of course there is such a thing as a force which opposes Christ. And I think the only sensitive Christian thing to do is to ask whether you and I—both of us—represent part of that ourselves. And the trouble with externalizing it and saying, "There is the pope or there is Napoleon who is the personification of evil," is it means we don't face up to the reality of evil in our own lives.

But there is stuck in this, you know, which really is deeply offensive. I mean to talk about the papacy as devious and diabolical, to say that the popes stain the world with blood and peopled hell. I feel deeply sorry for Roman Catholic people who listen to this. And I believe, politically, it is absolutely disastrous because it makes the intervention of the Irish Republic to help Roman Catholics seem justifiable.

I don't think it is justifiable. But this book, frankly, doesn't make the cause of the union much easier.

Paisley:

Well I would like to say to Mr. Bach. Is he prepared to turn a blind eye to history? Let him just go down to any library and pull out the Encyclopedia Britannica and look up one reference, the Inquisition and see just exactly what the Rome did do and see what she is continuing to do in places throughout the world. This idea that it is untrue to say that the pope didn't shed innocent blood, your own bishop says in his book, your own bishop, Christopher Wordsworth whom you couldn't question his scholarship...

Bach:

Another dated document, I see.

Paisley:

It is not a dated document at all.

Bach:

Well it's a pretty old thing, isn't it?

Paisley:

He says...well, I mean if you are saying then that the Bible is dated...

Bach:

No. I am saying the papacy has changed. That's the difference.

Paisley:

Well, the papacy has not changed. The papacy itself says it hasn't changed. But let's not get away from it. The Inquisition, let them read it in the Encyclopedia Britannica and then tell me is it not so that the Roman Catholic Church is responsible and is drunk—as the Bible says in Revelation 17 and as this bishop says in his book—with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

Now, I want to tell you this, Mr. Bach, today. And I am not here to be offensive to anybody. I am here to speak what I believe to be the truth.

Bach:

Yes, but what I don't understand.

Paisley:

But things have been said.

[multiple voices]

Paisley:

Many things have been said.

Host:

No man brought this up today. Let...

Paisley:

...about me and people that are offensive. They have to take them. They have to take. It is my business to proclaim there is only one Christ and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the sole King and Head of the Church.

Bach:

Well, I agree.

Paisley:

And if anybody else comes and says, "I am another Christ on earth. I am the way, the truth and the life. Outside me there is no salvation for you," that man is acting in the way that the Bible says he will act.

Bach:

Yes, but there is one thing that I don't understand.

[multiple voices]

Bach:

There are many, many faiths throughout the world. There is Protestantism, Roman Catholicism. There is Buddhism, Hinduism, et cetera, et cetera. There are many, many faiths that you would question. What I don't quite understand is why you cannot simply cleave to your own particular faith which you believe in strongly and stay with that and not use words and deeds—like Strasbourg—which many people find offensive of their faith.

Paisley:

Well, let me say what I said in Strasbourg. I quoted the simple words of Archbishop Cranmer that I reject the pope as Christ's enemy and as antichrist with all his [?]. Now for doing that Archbishop Cranmer, the first archbishop of Canterbury, was put to the fire and was burned. That was all I said. Now that is a statement of my faith as well.

I was not permitted...and I better put this on the line. I was not permitted to have a discussion in Strasbourg—neither was the Parliament—whether we should invite the pope. I would have thought I a democratic assembly if they were going to invite somebody would have the opportunity to debate it. I would have said that in a debate. I would have moved that we would not have accepted it. I would have cast my vote. I was never given that opportunity. And I want to say that that is an opportunity in a parliament like that which has now divided the nations. Protestants are a very tiny minority in Europe as everybody knows. That is what should have been done, were given that opportunity. But what was done to me was to try and silence me.

Now the Table Office themselves at Strasbourg said that the president was wrong. And he has now admitted that he was wrong in saying that he can silence me and keep me from speaking. I had a right under the rules. I have seen far worse protests than that. But my offense was what I said about the pope, because the pope has to be treated as a special person. His claims are to be upheld that he is Christ on earth. I saw them scuttering away to take down certain decorations that the pope didn't believe in and cover them up. It all had... And I had terrible job even getting...I had to fight to even get into my seat, to enter the seat. They blocked the passage ways to keep me out of my seat.

I just want to say this. It is my duty to state my views above board and clearly. I have stated my views in this book. I hope people will read this book and will see what I have said and the plain teachings. And I have said nothing that is contrary to what has been said by others.

Host:

Now I want to bring in John Bach here. What do you think the impact of not just the book, but the protest at the European Parliament. What would the impact be on Roman Catholic people and people that say in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland see it?

Bach:

I think many of them will be deeply offended. Everybody knows about the Protestant Reformation and the bloodshed and the bitterness. People also know that Roman Catholics were martyred, too, and I think every intelligent person wants to put those sad days behind them. And what worries me most is the vast crowd, the growing crowd of people who find all religion objectionable because they perceive that Christianity can only exist by bringing up these old vitriolic debates. I want to put them behind us. And Rome made mistakes. Protestantism made mistakes.

And I find in this book not only an attack on the papacy, I find an attack on ecumenists who are told that they reject the Bible, that they are deluded, they are drugged by the satanic poison of Rome. Even Billy Graham is attacked in this book.

As to atheists, they are apparently haters of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I am very sympathetic to the person who is atheistic because they cannot believe in a God who stirs up and is responsible for hatred. And such people maybe have rather more moral gut than those who are stirring up this hatred.

Now Mr. Paisley has been quoting to me from a number of dated books. Let me offer him a simple quotation. It is rather more up to date. It is from the Contemporary Edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* where it says that, "The identification of the pope with the antichrist has frequently made, especially in the less educated circles of Protestantism." Is the Oxford Dictionary right?

Paisley:

Well, I want to say that the Oxford Dictionary, when it says that, indicts the whole protestant communion because you have already stated that this was the basic principles of Protestants. It is in their formulas. So if you want to say that the formula of your church and the 39 Articles which goes on which would be offensive to Roman Catholics in regard to the mass, that the mass is a blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit, if you are prepared to say that these were drawn up by ignorant men...

Bach:

At a particular time in history...

Paisley:

You have an ignorant confession of faith on your head, be it. If that is the sort of church you belong to, let me say this to you today. What I have said in this book is entirely scriptural. You have said nothing to me today. All you can say it is all dated. The Bible is dated.

We go back to the foundation. The Bible is dated. Is the Bible true or is the Bible not true? And you have brought not one shred of evidence to say to me, "These prophecies..." In fact, you have laughed at the fact that the Bible might be able to tell the future.

Bach:

I don't believe the Bible is about fortune telling.

Paisley:

You don't believe the Bible can tell the future. You don't believe that Jesus Christ and his predictions were right. You don't believe that atheists are wrong. I want to say there is one way to heaven and it is not by a Protestant church or a Roman Catholic church. It is through Christ and through Christ alone. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name..."⁵

Bach:

Now I don't dispute that and neither does the Roman Catholic Church.

Paisley:

Oh, listen. Neither is... It is a strange thing you don't like what the Scriptures say. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."⁶

You know perfectly well that is not the doctrine of the Church of Rome. You need a priest to perform baptism to take away your original sin. You need the confession. You need all the sacraments of the church. That is the machinery of the Church of Rome.

Bach:

Ian Paisley, can I ask you a direct question? Do you ever discuss these views with Roman Catholics?

Paisley:

Yes.

Bach:

Because I am beginning to think the difference between us is that I enjoy talking to my Roman Catholic friends and finding out how they do interpret these things which we did

⁵ Acts 4:12

⁶ Ibid.

find offensive in the past, today. I find massive changes. And I believe some kind of dialog is the way ahead. Bitterness...

Paisley:

I talk to more Roman Catholics than Mr. Bach ever talks to. I talk to them in my advice centers. I talk to them in the streets. I entertain them in my home. I know what Roman Catholics say.

Let me tell you. I am not talking about individual Roman Catholics. I am talking about what the church teaches. What does the church say? Not what some individual says, that is not the teaching of the church, Mr. Bach. And you know that perfectly well.

Host:

We have to leave it at that point. We have been flooded with telephone calls. I promise I will bring them to you tomorrow. But, as usual, the clock has beaten us. John Bach, Ian Paisley, thank you for joining us.

Join us again on *Talk Back* tomorrow, usual time after the news at noon. Good bye.