

Have We Found the Antichrist?

Introduction. In the fall of 2025 and the spring of 2026, Peter Thiel, Silicon Valley tech billionaire, who co-founded PayPal and AI data analysis firm Palantir, has given multiple closed-door lectures and interviews on his beliefs about the Antichrist.

Mr. Thiel views the Antichrist as a “one-world state,” a global, unifying government or international regulatory body that curtails individual liberties, national sovereignty, and financial freedom. He views entities like the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and global financial surveillance systems (like FinCEN) as potentially “antichrist-like” in nature. He treats anti-technology panic, centralized power, and false promises of safety in light of threats such as climate change, AI, or nuclear war as the main signs to watch for regarding the Antichrist.

The apostle John addressed his readers about a very real problem in his day. He’s the only writer of the New Testament who uses the term “antichrist,” and he uses the term just five times (1 John 2:18, twice; 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7). The term is simple to understand. We use the same compound word every day. We have people who are “anti-smoking,” “anti-hunting,” “anti-Semitic,” or “anti-abortion”. Therefore, an “antichrist” is anyone who opposes Christ.

There have been thousands of suggestions of the Antichrist’s identity, including the discussion over the last six to nine months surrounding Peter Thiel’s beliefs. But the biblical information is very clear. Therefore, we’re going to investigate who the antichrists were in John’s day, and how we can guard against them today.

I. Who Were the Antichrists?

A. They refuse to follow apostolic authority.

1. In John’s day:

- a) They had associated with the apostles and other Christians.
- b) They had gone out on their own and were no longer in fellowship.
- c) Therefore, it was evident that they weren’t “of us;” i.e. approved.
- d) Later, John describes the “spirit of antichrist” as not hearing the apostles (i.e. respecting their apostolic authority).

2. In our day:

- (1) Many “antichrists” behave the same way.
 - (a) They may start out acting like they respect apostolic authority and seek to be with Christians.
 - (b) But eventually their true nature comes out and they won’t associate with those who respect apostolic authority very long.
- (2) Those who reject the apostles, reject Christ Himself, and are thus “antichrist” (cp. John 13:20).

B. They deny Jesus is the Christ.

1. Many Gnostics alleged that Jesus and Christ were two different persons.
 - a) They envisioned a “Christ spirit,” an ethereal but powerful supernatural being who descended on a man named Jesus at His baptism and left Him just before His death. Thus the “Christ spirit” wasn’t fully human, but

- only temporarily indwelt a man through whom that spirit, before departing, demonstrated extraordinary power and wisdom.
- b) This is denying that Jesus Christ came in the flesh which John identifies as the “spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:3-4).
- 2. They denied the Father and the Son.
 - a) By denying that Jesus is the Christ, they were denying the Son — He who was “begotten of the Father” and who became flesh (cp. John 1:14).
 - b) By denying the Son, they were in essence also denying the Father.
- 3. When John wrote his book, there were many “antichrists” in the world. This directly contradicts modern teachers who say that one “Antichrist” will arise in the future.
- 4. Today, an “antichrist” would be someone who denies Jesus to be the Messiah, or who denies the nature of Jesus (that He was fully God and man).

II. Guarding Against the Antichrists

A. John’s readers.

- 1. They were reminded of their “anointing.”
 - a) This “anointing from the Holy One” enabled them to “know all things” and “not to need that anyone teach you.”
 - b) The false teachers who threatened John’s readers employed the terms for knowledge and anointing to describe their religious experience.
 - (1) They arrogantly saw themselves as possessing an elevated and esoteric form of divine knowledge, and as the recipients of a special, secret, transcendent anointing.
 - (2) That led them to believe that they were privy to truth that the uninitiated lacked. John’s response, which was both a rebuttal to the antichrists and a reassurance to the Christians, was to assert that all Christians have an “anointing” of the Holy Spirit.
- 2. The “anointing” is a reference to the gifts of the Spirit.
 - a) They provided both revelation and confirmation of the truth for the early church (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:1-4; cp. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10).
 - b) These Christians could’ve identified the “antichrists” without John’s help, but their lack of action prompted John’s warnings.
- 3. Despite having this “anointing,” they needed to be encouraged to continue in what they had learned from the Spirit.
 - a) Having the gifts of the Spirit didn’t keep them from sinning or being misled (1 John 2:26).
 - b) Only by listening to what they had heard from the beginning would they continue to abide in the Son and the Father, and receive the promise of eternal life.

B. Christians today.

- 1. We don’t have the “anointing” like John’s readers.
 - a) Many people today misapply this verse to teach that we can have some direct “anointing” from God.
 - b) But if we did, then we wouldn’t need the Scriptures, and only the self-deceived would make such a claim today (1 John 2:20, 27)!

2. However, we have something just as good.
 - a) We have the Word of God, the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17).
 - b) We have “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).
 - c) We have an objective standard by which we can know the truth, and avoid being misled by subjective feelings that can be mistaken for some sort of prompting of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- C. But like John’s readers, we need to continue in what we’ve learned from the Spirit-given Word.
 1. Having the Word of God doesn’t ensure that we won’t be misled by others (cp. Galatians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 11:4).
 2. We don’t want to be open to deceptions by modern-day “antichrists;” therefore, here’s some suggestions for churches to equip its members:
 - a) Preach and teach the Bible regularly, not just inspirational thoughts, so members hear both doctrine and daily application.
 - b) Build sermons and classes around whole passages and books of the Bible so people learn context, not merely isolated verses.
 - c) Repeat key truths often, because consistent hearing helps people absorb and remember Scripture.
 - d) Use Bible study classes where members can ask questions, discuss passages, and learn how to study for themselves. Paul argued that Scripture equips saints for every good work.
 3. Individually, take care of yourself by learning material related to keeping the faith and establishing yourself as a keen Bible student through learning the material, studying debates and videos, and

Conclusion. In short, Thiel’s use of Scripture is, at the very least, extremely muddled, allowing him to project his own secular, political, and economic concerns onto religious texts out of context.

Scripturally speaking, “antichrists” are a very real problem. The “antichrist” isn’t a “one-world state” or a mysterious world leader who’s coming in the future. The “antichrist” could be much closer than you think.

The “antichrist” may be the younger man who actively advocates or simply believes that Jesus Christ never walked on Earth, but was a mythological figure. The “antichrist” could be the younger woman who actively advocates or simply believes there was a man named Jesus Christ, but He didn’t actually rise from the dead. The “antichrist” could be an older man who actively speaks out against or simply believes that the New Testament religion is a false religion. Or the “antichrist” might be the sweet older lady down the street who’s an atheist who’s indifferent or even hostile to “pure and undefiled religion.” These individuals, along with millions more, reject the authority of the apostles by rejecting the Scriptures!

We must “continue in the Son, and in the Father” (1 John 2:24). Remember, we’re living in the last hour, and Christ may come at any time and judge us for our unbelief! Hold fast to truth, and obey Him as we give the opportunity during our invitation song.