

Coming of the Son of Man

Bishop Vincent Thakore

There will be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars on earth... People will die of fright... for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (St. Luke 21:20)

False messiahs and false prophets will arise and they will perform signs and wonders so great even to deceive the believers. (St. Matthew 24:15)

But of the day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. You must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come. (St. Matthew 25:26)

When Jesus came, the Jewish people had one tribe of the twelve as the priestly tribe and one family of that tribe held the highest office of the priesthood. The tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. The priesthood of Aaron was hereditary, being handed down from the father to the son. It was for a short time and was destined to pass away one day.

The priesthood of Melchisedec was inherent in himself and independent of others. It was to continue until the end of time. Melchisedec was a king as well as a priest. Our Lord Jesus took upon himself the three-fold office of the prophet, the priest and the king. The prophet teaches men about God. The priest reconciles man to God. The king subdues man to God.

We are a traditional Anglican Church. Tradition means passed down from generation to generation. The Anglican Church has always taught that nothing should be taught contrary to the Scriptures.

If I may refer to Bishop Benning's article on the Internet:

"We trace our beginning from the event of that first evening of the week, the day our Lord Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples. He showed them His hands and His side and said, 'Peace be unto you; as my Father has sent me, even so I send you.' Then He breathed on them saying, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins you forgive, they will be forgiven unto them and whosoever sins you bound they shall be retained.'"

In passing on the ministerial office to their immediate successors, the apostles used the laying on of hands. The ceremony signifies the transfer of authority, and it gave its name to the rite of Ordination. The apostles laid their hands upon their successors, and these successors in turn did the same to their successors. This is called the Apostolic succession. The Apostolic succession is the link that connects the church of the first century to the church of today.

The church has been spoken as: The kingdom of heaven, the body of Christ, the temple of God, the bride or the branches of the vine.

We read in the Revelation of St. John the Divine:

"John, to the seven churches which are in Asia, grace be unto you, and peace, from Him who is, and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne: And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the first born of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and washes us from our sins by His own blood, and who has

made us kings and priests for God and His Father, to Him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 1:4)

These seven churches were neither independent of each other nor rival bodies of Christians. Later the sad divisions came into the church. Some divisions were for brief durations and others for longer durations. Theological language of the East was Greek and of the West was Latin. The second serious cause of separation between East and West arose in the General Council held in Nicaea in 325 A.D. A dangerous heresy which denied the Godhead of the Holy Ghost arose. So a second General Council was called. 150 bishops assembled at Constantinople in AD 381. They also ended up to *"And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father..."*

The words *"And the Son"* were added in reciting the Creed in Spain.

The third cause of the dispute came between the bishops and patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople. The early councils allowed the first place among the five patriarchs of the church to the bishop of Rome. It was to give honor, and not to give authority.

Another rift came in the Catholic body in the West and was between Roman and Anglican churches.

The fourth rift came when Rome excommunicated the historic Dutch Church, now known as the Old Catholic Church. Not one of these Catholic bodies lost any integrity of church unity. They maintained the tradition of Apostolic Succession, the divinely appointed sacraments, the creeds and the moral law.

After these four divisions came men who started dividing the church for their personal reasons, they would create one denomination here and the other there. They did not convert the unbelievers or people from other religions, but they started stealing Christian members of other churches. They did not follow the apostolic succession; they started interpreting the Bible to suit their purpose. Their authority in the church was not based on Holy Scriptures, traditions or reason. The Bible read apart from tradition and reason is subject to all kinds of private interpretations. Today the churches have become social clubs.

Is the world coming to an end? Do we see any signs of it? Where is the Antichrist? What is a cult? A cult represents a religious body that is unorthodox. A cult is any religious group which differs significantly as to the belief or practice from those religious groups which are regarded as the norm.

Let us observe the belief held by cult members: The material existence is not the Ultimate Reality. Feeling is more important than knowing. Being is of more value than doing. Inside of man dwells the divine essence and introspection is the way to discover the truth. When someone discovers the inner potential for spiritual power and knowledge, there remains no need to be bound by the outmoded ideas of heaven and hell, judgment, sin or salvation. The solution to all problems is to deny their existence.

The cult believers do not believe that Christianity is based on the teaching of Jesus and the doctrines of the apostles, who were privileged to sit at His feet and directly hear his words of life. We do not read that the apostles ever suggested that Christ had secretly given them access to divine mysteries. St. Peter, St. Paul, St. James and John the Divine openly declared what they had received. Not one of them claimed any private understanding of the teaching of Jesus apart from the scrutiny of the others.

All true believers have a uniform doctrine that transcends all cultural and conventional barriers, such as the Bible's presentation of the origin and existence of life and the eternal struggle between good and evil. The correct worldview must be based on the authority of the Scriptures.

Meditation is one of the most misunderstood words in today's world. Meditation is not a mental indulgence. The process of meditation involves shutting down the mind. While the Bible emphasizes the importance of knowledge as a key to communion with God. Christianity teaches that the mind represents one avenue by which God reveals His love. The creator has gifted man with the capacity of reason that plays an important part in discerning the will of the Lord.

The believer in meditation considers the mind to be an enemy of the spirit. Therefore, they use techniques to cause the mind to cease functioning. This attack on the mind involves these actions:

Fasting, putting the body into different postures, keep long periods of silence and repeat some kind of words or sentences. By repeatedly chanting a word or sentence over and over, the mind goes into a kind of sleep. This phenomenon can be illustrated by noticing that after a while the sense of smell becomes unnoticeable. We become accustomed to it. The same way when a person repeats a word over and over, it causes the meditator to lose touch with the world, and he doesn't know what he has been repeating.

In some situations the meditator tries to merge his consciousness with the Universal Mind. As taught, he hypnotizes himself into believing that he has achieved the merger with the universal mind. What really happens is that the intensity of the experience creates an illusion that can be duplicated by intoxication. Thus, the meditator should not be deceived into thinking that he has really got in touch with the Lord.

The meditator has come face to face with his own selfish illusion. The meditator could have left his mind and body open to an invasion by the evil spirits.

The Christian meditator does not try to empty his mind; instead, he seeks to fill it with the knowledge of God.

Psalm 119:97 "How I love your teaching Lord! I study it all day long. Your command makes me wiser than my foes..."

Since Satan is by nature a destroyer and not a creator, the devil can only copy God by taking what is true and twisting it just enough to produce a wrong copy of reality.

So to ask the question where is the Antichrist, we really do not know. It is so difficult to identify what is wrong and what is right. We must be vigilant and read the Scriptures and pray to our Lord Jesus to give us the discerning spirit to identify the false prophets and false teachings. What we see as simple and innocent turns out to be against the will of God. Taking us away from our salvation. Meditation is such a simple act, but using it in a wrong way we can be misled.

Keep praying together, and continue to have discerning spirits, because you will not know when and where the Antichrist will appear. Continue to be vigilant what church you go to, what interpretation of the Bible you hold. Stay alert all the time to discern who is the false prophet, who is teaching you the spiritual things that you should not learn.

We read in Psalm 119:97, "How I love your teaching Lord! I study it all day long. Your command makes me wiser than my foes..."

It is not by keeping our minds empty, but by keeping it filled with the love of God and love of fellowmen, as commanded by our Lord Jesus, that we will be saved.

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