

CALL to PRAYER - Hebrews 4:15-16 Thank God for our sympathetic High Priest

Intro - The traditional religious calendar says this is Advent season. *Advent* = arrival / coming. *Advent* can refer to Jesus' First Coming or His Second Coming. And so, the *Advent season* is the countdown to the arrival of Jesus Christ. No one knows the day or the hour of Christ's coming; (either His 1st or 2nd coming). But there are certain essential elements that we do know and today we are going to talk about an essential. Without this essential you do not have Christianity; in fact, you wind up with the opposite of Christianity. The title of today message is *The Spirit of Anti-Christ*. This may seem an odd title during Advent, but the spirit of anti-Christ changes an essential about Jesus Christ's arrival. That essential is that Jesus Christ came, and is coming, in the flesh. Christianity is a flesh and bones religion. It is not ethereal or mystical, it is material. It is not fiction or fake...it is flesh & bone. Christianity is not a set of theoretical ideas; it is set in the tangible person & work of Jesus Christ. God became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus is the flesh & bone image of the invisible God. The mystery of The Eternal God becoming material man is an essential part of the message of Christianity. Christianity is real and it corresponds to reality. It is about a real Person who really came and really lived... died... raised...ascended... and is really coming again. He can really save you. A flesh & blood Savior that can redeem you body, soul & spirit. Our human existence is in the flesh and our Creator became incarnate - flesh. Our text today gives warning about those who want to mystify the material in Jesus' arrival. They want to separate what God has joined together. THE WARNING THE REAL

2 John 7 - The Spirit of Anti-Christ

THE WARNING

- The Holy Spirit often warns us about deceivers & deception that creep into our religion.
 - 2 John 7 - many deceivers...anti-christ (1 John 4:1)
 - 2 Cor. 11:3-4
- The deception is a distortion of Jesus Christ. The cults have the wrong christ.
 - They talk about "Jesus", but it is a different Jesus
 - They talk about the "gospel", but it is a different gospel. (Gal. 1:6-7)
 - You must probe beneath the surface of the semantics.
 - Define the terms and that will help ferret out the false.
- There is an ancient heresy (that is still around today) called *Gnosticism*
 - Gnosticism claimed a special knowledge (*GR* - "*gnosis*") into spiritual understanding
 - They had the secret
 - Gnosticism elevated the *spiritual* above the *material*
 - The flesh was seen as evil and irrelevant - God would never be flesh
 - Gnosticism taught a different Jesus (gnostic gospels)
 - Cerinthus (heretic from Ephesus) taught that the spirit of christ came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him before his death. (John vigorously opposed Cerinthus)
 - Their "jesus" was some sort of an Avatar
 - "The Christ" was separate from Jesus and could switch to a different person/prophet)

