

Antichrist?

Post by "Don" of October 8, 2023 at 7:41 AM

[Cassius](#) mentioned in another thread about being curious if Epicurus or the Epicureans were the Antichrist. Here we go...

First, the word ἀντίχριστος "antichrist" only appears in the New Testament books of 1 and 2 John:

1Jo 2:18 - Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

1Jo 2:22 - Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

1Jo 4:3 - And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

2Jo 1:7 - For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

The "antichrists" of 1 John are Docetic Christians within the Christian community. Docetism was the idea that Jesus was the "adopted" son of God and not a pre-existent divine being and so on. Docetic Christians didn't believe Jesus was God "in the flesh." This was antithetical to the proto-orthodox doctrine, and so, they were anti-Christ. The context of 2 John also sounds like (to other Christian scholars) that those antichrists are docetic Christians who have left the proto-orthodox flock.

I find it interesting in Dewitt's book that he often hedges his bets and uses phrases like "a sort of Antichrist" or "associated with Antichrist" or "This is Antichrist, though the name is not used." That word antichrist has such Boogeyman connotations in popular culture that it seems to me like Dewitt invokes that word to conjure up Epicurus as the big bad villain of all of Christian Scripture. And the overall evidence isn't there. I'll admit, there might be more there there than I originally thought, but *nowhere near* to the extent that Dewitt wants there to be in his Rorschach test approach to the texts. Fully agree with what Sandnes states in his book (mentioned in another thread):

Quote

[Dewitt's] book is strong on suggestions but short on argument and evidence. A cautious reading of the book is therefore recommended.

Next up .. a look at Antiochus Epiphanies, the Epicurean King! (Insert scary minor key music here) 😊

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 11, 2023 at 6:51 PM

Christian heresy has always really fascinated me.

Incidentally, I have been reading a **lot** about Marcion recently and the development of Biblical Canon. It is interesting to view Christianity at a time before orthodoxy developed, and explore how we view those figures from history.

Post by “Cassius” of October 11, 2023 at 7:02 PM

Isn't Marcion the one who thought ONLY Paul was worth reading, or so I have that reversed and he was against Paul and preferred the others?

Post by “Don” of October 11, 2023 at 8:11 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

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If you haven't read Bart Ehrman's books yet, I highly recommend them. His *Jesus Before The Gospels* is fascinating and looks at how the oral traditions shaped the stories in the gospels.

PS. If you're a podcast listener, he also has [a weekly podcast with Megan Lewis called Misquoting Jesus](#).