

7. Signs of the Times

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7. WHY WE MUST HAVE AN ORTHODOX WORLD-VIEW



So, to repeat the first point: we watch the signs of the times in order to recognize Christ when He comes, because there have been many false Christs, many more false Christs will come, and at the very end of the world there will finally come one who is called Antichrist. The Antichrist will unite all those who are deceived into thinking he is Christ, and this will include all those whose interpretation of Christianity has gone off. Often you can look at some people who confess Christianity, and it seems that many of their ideas are correct—they go according to the Bible. Then you look here and there, and you see that here's a mistake, there's a mistake. Just recently Fr. Dimitry Dudko, in the little newspaper he puts out, said there came to him someone who claimed to be Christian. As he began to talk to him, he began to feel that this person wasn't Orthodox, and he said, "What confession are you?" "Oh, that's not important. We're all Christians. The only important thing is that we be Christians." He said, "Well, no, no, we have to be more precise than that. For example, if you're a Baptist and I'm an Orthodox, I believe that we have the Lord's Body and Blood, and you don't." We must be precise because there are many differences. It's good to have the attitude: I have respect for you, and I won't interfere with your faith, but nonetheless there's a true way of believing and there are ways which go away from the truth. I must be according to the truth.

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In the same way we can see that many people who are not Orthodox have many good things about them, and then they go off in some respect. In the end it's up to God to judge, not to us. But we can see what will happen if all these little ways people go off now are projected into the last times, if people still believe that way when the last times come. These mistakes cause people, when they see Antichrist, to think that he is Christ. There are very many sects now which believe that Christ is coming to rule for a thousand years from the Temple in Jerusalem. Therefore, when the Jews start building the Temple, these sects will only rejoice because, to them, this is the sign of Christ's coming. On the contrary, we know that this isn't the sign of the Antichrist coming, because Christ will no more come out of the Temple. The Temple has been destroyed. Christ comes only at the end of the world to begin the eternal kingdom of heaven. The only one who will come to the Temple is Antichrist.

So, this is why the correct Orthodox Christian understanding and preparation based upon this understanding are absolutely necessary. The closer we get to the very last times, the more indispensable this understanding and preparation are.