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March 28, 2018: Is Donald Trump the Antichrist?

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Title: Is Donald Trump the Antichrist?

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3/28/2018—I am kidding. My universe does not have Second Comings or the End Times. (I don't mean the universe won't end, just that these are natural processes, not interventions by supernatural powers.) I raise the question in the context of a column by Marc Thiessen and my response by letter in the Post-Gazette (here). Thiessen asked why conservative Christians stick with President Trump. His answer was that Trump has delivered policies, particularly protection of religious liberty, that are crucial to this group. My objection arose when Thiessen put this delivering in terms of the legal philosophy of strict construction of the Constitution. I have a general objection to originalism that its proponents do not practice it when it suits them—Justice Gorsuch's vote in the church playground repaving case being the current example. But Thiessen raises a bigger question. Clearly, Trump is continuing the denigration of Christianity that has been ongoing since Nietzsche's Death of God. Young people see churchgoers supporting the Trump described by Stormy Daniels and they just laugh at Christ. Now, if there were a Satan, wouldn't this be just what he would want? I don't have all the details right but I read that the reference to the antichrist in particular comes from the Letters of John in the New Testament. The relationship between this and the Beast in the Book of Revelation is unclear to me, but apparently has also been identified with an antichrist figure. But one theme stands out in many of these streams of thought. The antichrist deceives humankind. And that would naturally include many churchgoers. It is a bad trade. Whatever policy goals Christians think they are achieving with Trump are all outweighed by associating with this man—a man as far in spirit from Jesus as one could be. The harm to the gospel is the real tragedy of Donald Trump. Christians who support him are deceived.