



## The Antichrist

*Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900 ) Translated by H. L. Mencken*

Read by:	Multiple readers	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Genre:	Non-Fiction, Philosophy		

The German title of *The Antichrist*, *Der Antichrist*, translates into English as “The Anti-Christian” as well as “The Anti-Christ”, and may be a better term for its criticism of the defects of Christian dogma, which Nietzsche believes go against the grain of nature and an amoral “will to power”. Pity for the weak is central to Christian morality, but Nietzsche sees it as nihilistic and opposed to life, leading to depression and loss of vitality. He sees the reverence for a pure spirit above the tangible world of the senses as a “pure lie”, a reversal of common sense that stands the truth upside down. He finds the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant ridiculous, seeing the absurdity of abiding by any idea that cannot be proven but also cannot be refuted. He saw Christ

as “the only Christian”, a powerful being in which there was no separation of God and man, and argued that Christian dogma had evolved counter to its original principles through a privileged class that catered to the resentment of the disempowered by promising a future bliss (and punishment for the oppressors) in exchange for following the faith in the here and now. Nietzsche admittedly wrote for a very limited audience that had the stomach for his harsh truth, and the tone of the book is consistently vituperative. It was written in 1888 but held for publication until 1895 due to its controversial and uncompromising criticism of religion. Shortly after its completion, Nietzsche suffered a nervous breakdown that marked the beginning of his long decline.

**Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche** (October 15, 1844 – August 25, 1900) was a German philologist, philosopher, cultural critic, poet and composer. He is best known for several works that articulate his call for a radical rethinking of the nature of man, truth and philosophy: Thus Spake Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil, The Genealogy of Morals, and the Anti-Christ. The expressions “God is dead” and “the will to power” derive directly from his work.

Nietzsche was born near Liepzig in the province of Saxony, part of Prussia. After his father, a Lutheran minister, died of a brain ailment in 1849, his mother moved the family to Naumburg to live with her mother. His secondary schooling at the prestigious Schulpforta was followed by studies of theology and philology at the University of Bonn and the University of Liepzig. He was appointed professor of Philology at the University of Basel at the unheard of age of 24 in 1868. He renounced his Prussian citizenship before moving to Switzerland. During his tenure at Basel he published regularly and was befriended by composer Richard Wagner, becoming a member of his inner circle. Increasingly beset by illness, he was forced him to resign in 1879 and spent the next ten years as an independent author until suffering a mental collapse in 1889. He was treated at a clinic in Basel and then cared for by his mother and sister until his death in 1900. His condition was initially diagnosed as paresis due to tertiary syphilis, but some hinted that dark forces unleashed by his ideas were at play. Reexamination of his evaluation documents show brain cancer to be the cause of his breakdown and eventual demise.