

## 1 John 2:18-27

### Antichrists Are Here

In Matthew 13 Jesus Christ put forth a parable and said,

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; <sup>25</sup> but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. (Matthew 13:24, 25)

Tares are a type of weed that looks almost exactly like wheat. In fact you can't tell the difference until the plants mature. The wheat will be full of grain but the tares will be barren. The point of the parable is that among God's people there will be genuine believers and counterfeits. Truth will be taught but lies will also sneak in. And the counterfeits and the lies will look almost genuine.

John's purpose in writing his first letter was to help genuine believers have fellowship with God and Jesus Christ so their joy would be full. It was also to help the genuine believers to discern the counterfeits. First there was the moral test. John wrote,

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (1 John 1:6)

And,

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1 John 2:3, 4)

Secondly there was the test of love. John declared,

He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. <sup>10</sup> He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. (1 John 2:9, 10)

Then,

Do not love the world or the things in the world... [for] the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

(1 John 2:15, 17)

Now there is a doctrinal test; a test concerning what is taught as truth. And it centers on the person of Jesus Christ. If you are wrong about Jesus Christ you will be wrong in many other ways, because he is the chief cornerstone upon which the church is built.<sup>1</sup> Here is what John wrote about the doctrinal test.

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.  
<sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

<sup>20</sup> But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. <sup>21</sup> I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

(1 John 2:18-21)

John has just told us to not love the world, because it is passing away. And then he says "it is the last hour" or more literally "a last hour." In the New Testament the whole time between the first coming of Christ and his return is called the last days. For example, Hebrews 1:12, states,

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*<sup>2</sup>

Calling the days we live in the last days is a way of saying that each year, each day, each breath that passes brings us closer to the end of the age and the return of Jesus Christ. And if you think that a little over 2000 years of end times is foolish, here is how the apostle Peter would respond to you.

The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 2:20

<sup>2</sup> See also Hebrews 9:26; Acts 2:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 10:11, 2 Timothy 3:1-5

count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night  
(2 Peter 3:9, 10)

Jesus Christ will return and now is the time to repent and be saved. When he returns it will be too late.<sup>3</sup>

Now, when John says it is the last hour he is giving an urgent call for us to be faithful and diligent in our lives as Christians.<sup>4</sup> And the thought about the end of the age brings the thought of the Antichrist who will make the world tremble.<sup>5</sup> But John makes a stunning statement. He wrote, “even now many antichrists have come.” In other words, we are not just waiting for the ultimate Antichrist, the spirit of Antichrist is already at work and we better be prepared!

The many antichrists were not outright opponents of Christ, but their doctrine of who Christ is differed greatly from John’s. What they taught about Jesus Christ was a lie even though it sounded religious. The apostle Paul warned about ministers like this, saying,

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.  
(2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

The antichrists and those who followed them were once in the church, but they left to form their own church with their own doctrine of Christ. But these people were never really saved. If they were, John said, they would have remained faithful to the truth about Jesus Christ. We will learn about their false teaching in a moment. But the antichrist’s departure from the truth was their unmasking as false teachers. The apostle Paul warned about this too. The warning was given to the church leaders of the city of Ephesus.

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves

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<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:2

<sup>4</sup> See also Romans 13:11-14

<sup>5</sup> This is the first occurrence of the term “Antichrist.” Its usage is found only in John’s epistles. It refers to the coming final world ruler energized by Satan who will seek to replace and oppose the true Christ (Daniel 8:9-11; 11:31-38; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Revelation 13:1-5)

will come in among you, not sparing the flock.  
<sup>30</sup> Also from among yourselves men will rise up,  
speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples  
after themselves.  
(Acts 20:29, 30)<sup>6</sup>

Just as God's Spirit inspires true teachers, so there is an evil spirit at work in false teachers. And the Spirit of God and the spirit of antichrists struggle for the hearts and minds of men and women. What makes this so important is that we see evil at work like this in our own day. There are people who lie and deceive. They make a deceptive statement and repeat it and repeat it until it takes root. A skilled messenger can take an idea and promote it until, unaware, we are polluted by it.

So the many antichrists and those they deceived in John's time left to form their own church. But the genuine believers stayed faithful to the truth and John tells them why remained faithful.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. <sup>21</sup> I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.  
(1 John 2:20, 21)

When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you receive the anointing of God's holy Spirit. And the Spirit of God guides believers into a full understanding of the truth. In the promise of the new birth, God said that He would put His Spirit in our hearts and the Spirit would enable us to know the truth and to be faithful to the truth.<sup>7</sup> The Word of God tells us about people who are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."<sup>8</sup> This is because they are not truly saved and do not have the Spirit of God. <sup>9</sup> Now, we come to the great lie of the many antichrists who are already at work in the world.

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?  
He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.  
<sup>23</sup> Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father  
either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father

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<sup>6</sup> The church has been well warned about false teachers (Matthew 24:5; Mark 13:6)

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel 36:27

<sup>8</sup> 2 Timothy 3:7

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9-11

also.  
(1 John 2:22, 23)

The false teachers taught that Jesus is a man and they are correct on this. But they taught that the Christ is an eternal spirit being who came upon Jesus at his baptism, but left him before he died on the cross. This was the lie of the antichrists. And it was from this seed of a lie that the doctrine of the Trinity has bloomed.

The word "Christ" or "Messiah" is not a name. It is a title and it means the Anointed One. Jesus is God's anointed ultimate prophet, priest and king. Acts 10:38 tells us that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Acts 2:36 also tells us that "God has made this Jesus...both Lord and Christ."

Therefore, to deny that Jesus is the Christ is to deny what God has said about His Son. The Bible, God's Word to us, declares that Jesus, the Christ, is a man; fully human.<sup>10</sup> The man, Jesus, the Christ, the Anointed One, died for our sins. And God raised Jesus, the Christ, up from the dead. Jesus is the Christ. There was never an eternal spirit being known as the Son or Christ.

Today, most Christians believe a lie about Jesus Christ. They have been taught that God is a Trinity of persons and that Jesus is God. They have been deceived. They have been seduced. But the greatest defense against error is to know the truth, remember the truth and obey the truth. And that is what the apostle John tells us.

Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. <sup>25</sup> And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

<sup>26</sup> These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you. <sup>27</sup> But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.  
(1 John 2: 24-27)

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<sup>10</sup> Acts 2:22; Romans 5:12-19; 1 Timothy 2:4; Hebrews 2:14-18

The two main defensive weapons against false doctrine are the Word of God and the Spirit of God. John urges us to let the Word, the truth, that we have heard “abide” in us. This means more than simply reading your Bible once in a blue moon.<sup>11</sup> It means more than reading it as an obligation and checking it off your to do list. Abide means to remain in you. Let the Word of God fill your heart and take hold of it. Let the Word of God make itself at home in your heart. Let it control how you think and behave. Let Scripture determine what you desire and hope for and live for. We must decide to let the truth abide in us. But in grace and mercy and love God has decided that His anointing, His Spirit **will** abide in us.

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.  
(1 John 2:27)

With regard to the Scriptures we are to decide to let it abide in our minds and hearts. But the Spirit is always in us. We have the anointing, the gift of the Spirit and it abides. And with the Spirit we have the power to discern truth from error.

When John says “you do not need anyone to teach you” he does not mean that there is no need for teachers. John is teaching here in his letter. Pastors and teachers are Christ's gift to the church.<sup>12</sup> But it does mean that with the Scriptures and the Spirit of God you have the ability to understand truth. There are Christians who hear preaching on the Trinity, that three persons make up one God, and they have this sense that it just doesn't add up. The Spirit is at work in them and if they study the Word they can learn the truth.

Or perhaps you've had this experience where you have read a passage of Scripture a hundred times, but all of a sudden it comes alive in your heart. The Scripture speaks to you in a way it never had before. That's the anointing of the Spirit working in you.

There are three great points made in this section of 1 John. The first point is this: You will never really understand the deep truths of the Bible until you are saved and anointed and filled with the Spirit of God. When you hear someone say that he or she doesn't understand the Bible, that person may not be saved.

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<sup>11</sup> A "blue moon" is when there are two full moons in one month. Since this is rare (actually once a year) the phrase "once in a blue moon" is used to say something rarely happens.

<sup>12</sup> Ephesians 4:11-13

But he or she can be through the love and grace of God and their faith in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, each and every day brings us closer to the end of this age. And there are already many antichrists who lie and deceive and seduce. They promote devilish doctrines about Jesus Christ and other matters like the afterlife. And therefore, thirdly, you must make the decision to let the Word of God abide in you.

Soak up the Bible: believe it, love it, obey it; let it transform your life. Be valiant in defending and promoting the truth. And be thankful that the anointing, the Spirit of God will always remain in you. The Spirit of God is your guarantee of everlasting life in the age to come.<sup>13</sup> The Spirit is your new nature enabling you to grow more and more like the image of God in Jesus Christ. To become more and more like Christ is the goal of Christianity.<sup>14</sup> And we will see this from John's letter in the next teaching.

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<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 1:13, 14

<sup>14</sup> Romans 8:29