

Subject: *Straight Talk about Antichrist*

Scripture: *1 John 2:18-27*

John is writing this letter to believers (vs. 1, “little children). This is a term of endearment. He is saying some very strong things, but everything comes from a loving heart. He now addresses the subject of antichrist, a word that is found only in the writings of John.

1. The Description of Antichrist

In identifying the antichrist, John reminds us that we are now in “the last time (hour).” He mentions this twice in verse 18. The readers knew that antichrist would come, and John reminds them that even at that time many antichrists were present. This was the way they knew it was the last time. What did he mean by this? The last time (hour) began when Jesus came to earth and will continue until He comes again. You can’t have antichrist until you first have Christ. Once Christ comes some will oppose Him and some will falsely represent Him.

- **Hebrews 1:1-2** ¹ *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*
- **Hebrews 9:26** *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world (age) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*
- **1 Peter 1:20** *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*
- **1 Peter 4:7** *But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*

The word “antichrist” has a double meaning. The prefix “anti” can mean “against” or “in place of.” Antichrist then describes someone who is opposed to Christ or someone who tries to replace Christ. The Bible uses the term antichrist in three ways:

- **A person called Antichrist** – John wrote at least 40 years after the writing of Second Thessalonians in which Paul described the coming Antichrist, but there he is called the man of sin and the son of perdition (destruction). What Paul said in 2 Th. 2:3-12 points to a definite time, a definite event, and a definite person. The Antichrist is further described in Daniel and Revelation.
- **Many antichrists** – John speaks of people who do the work of antichrist by either opposing Christ or seeking to replace Christ. There is one Antichrist, but there are many antichrists. He will be the final one, but he is not the only one. When John uses the term antichrists he is speaking about false teachers and those who follow them, anyone who rejects Christ and in effect is a willful non-believer.
- **The spirit of antichrist** – See 1 John 4:3. This is the spirit or attitude of antichrist. So antichrist refers to a force, a spirit at work in unbelievers and false teachers and ultimately working in the man of sin who will come, the Antichrist. The word antichrist means opposed to Christ, against Christ, and seeking to replace Christ.

Jesus predicted some would try to imitate Him or falsely represent Him, **Matthew 24:24** *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.* Jesus also revealed those who would oppose Him. He said in **Matthew 12:30** *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*

2. The Departure of Antichrist

“They” in verse 19, refers to the antichrists of verse 18. They defected or departed. Their departure from the church was troubling, but John says that something good came out of it. They knew for sure that those who left never really belonged in the first place. Their departure was a confirmation that they were not true believers. If they had been genuine believers, they would have continued with us, John says.

We need to understand this in the context of the first century world. In those days a person was either a believer or an unbeliever and either in the church family or outside of the church family. The lines were clear cut. Things were much simpler back then. There was only one church, the church of Jesus Christ. There were no denominations. John is not talking about some believers going from one church to join another church. They had left the one and only church which proved they were not believers at all.

3. The Denial of Antichrist

See verse 22. Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar and is antichrist. A person may claim to believe in the Father, but if he denies the Son he doesn’t know the Father at all. To deny Christ as the Son of God, to deny His deity is to deny the very heart of who He is. Every false religion and cult denies the deity of Christ. They may say that Jesus was a good man, a great teacher, a prophet, even a miracle-worker, but if they deny that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, they are antichrist. See 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7.

4. The Deception of Antichrist

See verse 26. These antichrists (false teachers) were leading people astray. False teachers get most of their followers out of good churches. The Bible warns us about spiritual seduction. **1 Timothy 4:1** *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.* When the ultimate Antichrist comes, the world will believe his lies. See 2 Thess. 2:3-12. Anyone who rejects the truth about Christ will believe the lies of the Antichrist. How can we be protected from deception and lies? We must know and believe the truth.

5. The Defense against Antichrist

Notice in verse 20, John shifts to “you,” that is, believers. He has been talking about the antichrists, defectors, the unbelievers, but you (believers) have an unction (same word translated as anointing in verse 27). This is the word *chrisma*, an anointing, smearing, rubbing, from the verb, *chrio*, and related to the word *Christos*, anointed One.

This is something true of all believers. This is something they have, not something they should ask for or pray for.

- **2 Corinthians 1:21** *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.*

Believers have an unction or anointing, and this is the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, especially in terms of His teaching the truth to them. Look again in verse 20, the unction is connected to knowing all things and knowing the truth (vs. 21). Again in verse 27 the anointing is mentioned along with teaching the truth. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us the truth about Him. True Christians have a built-in lie detector.

- **John 14:26** *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*
- **John 16:13** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.*

This doesn't eliminate the need for Bible study or the need of human teachers. The Bible tells us the value of teachers who have the spiritual gift of teaching and the need for diligent study in the Word. This means that as we depend on the Holy Spirit in us He will show us the truth, and when we know the truth we can detect a lie and those who teach lies and we will be protected.

The point John makes is powerful. True believers know the truth about Jesus because the Holy Spirit is in them to teach them. If you know and receive and believe the truth, you won't fall for a lie. You will detect a lie because you know the truth.

We know the truth, but do we believe it and receive it? Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and the only Lord and Savior. Do you know Him? Have you received Him by repentance and faith?