

Beware Of Antichrists!

1 John 2:18-27

Study #7

(Not entirely original with me)

INTRODUCTION:

1. With a term of endearment (“little children”) that is a favorite of John’s, he now proceeds to warn them about a problem that was very real in his day... ***“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.” (1 Jn 2:18)***
2. John is the only writer of the New Testament who uses the term “antichrist”, and he uses the term just five times...
 - a. Twice here in **1 Jn 2:18** (“antichrist is coming...many antichrists have come”)
 - b. Again in **1 Jn 2: 22** (“He is antichrist who denies...”)
 - c. Also in **1 Jn 4:3** (“this is the spirit of the antichrist...”)
 - d. And in **2 Jn 7** (“a deceiver and an antichrist.”)
3. The term is commonly used today by many to refer to one individual (“The Antichrist”), who is to appear in the “end times”...
 - a. A connection is usually made to the “man of sin” described by Paul in **2 Th 2:1-11**, and that John possibly has reference to the same individual
4. It is evident that John was more concerned about “antichrists” who have already come; and so we might ask...
 - a. Who were these “antichrists”?
 - b. How were the Christians to avoid being misled by them?
 - c. How can we avoid being misled by antichrists today (whether it be one or many)?

I. IDENTIFYING THE “ANTICHRISTS”

A. THEY REFUSE TO FOLLOW APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY... (19)

1. In John’s day...
 - a. They were individuals who had associated with the apostles and other Christians
 - b. But they had gone out on their own, and were no longer in fellowship with the apostles
 - c. Thus it became manifest that they were not “of us” (approved by the apostles)
 - d. Later, John describes the “the spirit of the antichrist” as that which does not hear the apostles (i.e., respect apostolic authority) - cf. **1 Jn 4:3-6**
2. In our day...
 - a. Many “antichrists” behave the same way
 - 1) They may start out acting like they respect apostolic authority, and seek to be with Christians
 - 2) But eventually their true nature comes out and they will not want to be with those who respect apostolic authority very long

- b. So a sign of “antichrists” is their attitude toward the “apostles’ doctrine” (i.e., the Scriptures)
- c. Those who reject the apostles, reject Christ himself (cf. **Jn 13:20**), and are thus “antichrist”!

B. THEY DENY JESUS IS THE CHRIST... (22-23)

1. In John’s day...
 - a. They denied that Jesus is the Christ - cf. **1 Jn 2:22a**
 - 1) Many Gnostics alleged that Jesus and Christ were two different persons
 - a) That Christ merely appeared to have flesh, but in reality did not
 - b) Or that the Christ descended upon Jesus at His baptism and departed at the time of His suffering
 - 2) It is this denial that Jesus Christ came in the flesh that John identifies as the spirit of the antichrist - **1 Jn 4:3-4**
 - b. They denied the Father and the Son - cf. **1 Jn 2:22b-23**
 - 1) By denying that Jesus is the Christ, they were denying the Son (i.e., He who was “begotten of the Father” and who became flesh)! - cf. **Jn 1:14**
 - 2) By denying the Son, they were in essence also denying the Father! - cf. **Jn 13:20**
2. Today, an “antichrist” would be one...
 - a. Who denies Jesus to be the Messiah
 - b. Who denies the nature of Jesus (that He was fully God and fully man)

Those who deny apostolic authority, and especially their teaching about the nature of Jesus Christ, manifest the spirit of “antichrist”.

II. GUARDING AGAINST THE “ANTICHRISTS”

A. JOHN’S INITIAL READERS...

1. Were reminded of their “anointing” - **1 Jn 2:20-21, 27**
 - a. This “anointing from the Holy One”...
 - 1) Enabled them to “know all things”
 - 2) Enabled them “not to need that anyone teach you”
 - b. I understand it to be a reference to the “gifts of the Spirit”...
 - 1) Which in New Testament times served to provide **revelation** and **confirmation** of the truth for the early church
 - 2) So that they could have identified the “antichrists” without John’s help
2. Despite having this “anointing”, they needed to be encouraged to continue in what they had learned (from the Spirit) - **1 Jn 2:24-25**
 - a. Having the “gifts of the Spirit” did not keep them from sinning, or being misled - **1 Jn 2:26**
 - b. Only by heeding that which they had heard from the beginning would they continue to abide in the Son and in the Father, and receive the promise of eternal life!

B. CHRISTIANS TODAY...

1. We don’t have the “anointing” like John’s readers did...
 - a. Though many people today do misapply this verse to teach that we can have some “anointing” from God
 - b. But if we did, then we would not need the Scriptures (cf. **1 Jn 2:20,27**), and only the self-deceived would make such a claim today!

2. However, we have something just as good!
 - a. That is, the Word of God, which is the “sword of the Spirit” - cf. **Ep 6:17**
 - b. We have “the faith once delivered unto the saints” - cf. **Ju 3** c. I.e., an objective standard by which we can know the truth, and avoid being misled by subjective feelings that can be mistaken for some sort of prompting of the Spirit
 - c. With the Scriptures, we have all we need to know God’s will - cf. **2 Ti 3:16-17**
3. But like John’s readers, we need to be encouraged to continue in what we have learned from the Spirit-given Word...
 - a. Having the Word of God does not ensure that we won’t be misled by others
 - b. For unless we study and apply the Word, we are open to deceptions by modern-day “antichrists”!

CONCLUSION:

1. “**Antichrists**” are a very real problem for us today:
 - a. For while there may not be many professing Christians who deny Jesus is the Christ, or that He came in the flesh...
 - b. ...there are many who reject the authority of the apostles by the manner in which they disregard the Scriptures!
 - c. The solution then...remains the same for 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.” (1 Jn 2:24)***
2. As an impetus to heed the words of John, remember what he said was the significance of these “antichrists”: ***“...by which we know it is the last hour”***
 - a. John knew that in the scheme of God’s redemption Jesus could return at any time!
 - b. The fact that it has been 1900 years since John penned these words does not detract from their truthfulness (for chronological time is meaningless to God - cf. **2 Pe 3:8-9**)
 - c. We are living, therefore, in “the last hour”, and Christ may come in judgment at any time!
 - Are we ready for His coming?

(Material from Mark A. Copeland)