

I. Introduction and review: Is antichrist in the world today?

II. You are living in the last hour of antichrist. v. 18

A. How can John say it is the *last hour*? 2:8,17

1. Did John mistakenly believe Jesus would return during his life? Acts 1:7 Mt. 24:36
2. In the grand scheme of God's plan, the old age has ended and the final age has begun with the coming of Christ. Acts 2:17 Heb. 1:1-2 9:26 I Co. 10:11 I Pe. 1:20 Gen. 49:1 Num. 24:14 Isa. 2:2 Mic. 4:1 Joel 2:28 Jer. 23:20 30:24 Ezek. 38:16
3. The presence of active opposition (antichrists) is one feature of this age. Mt. 24:5,24
4. When this age ends, the kingdom of God will come in all its fullness and glory.
5. Why the delay? II Pe. 3:8-9 Mt. 24:42f

B. You have been told THE Antichrist is coming.

1. While John is the first to use the term "antichrist", the concept of the final personal incarnation of evil opposition to God is taught throughout Scripture. Ezek. 38-39 Dan. 7:1f 9:31 12:11 II Th. 2:3f Rev. 12-13
2. What does the name *Antichrist* signify? *Preposition anti: 2 meanings. Both!*
 - a. He is opposed to (against) Christ. II Th. 2:3-4 Rev. 13:15 12:17
 - b. He is a counterfeit (instead of) Christ. Mt. 24:24 Rev. 13:13

C. Many antichrists have already appeared! Mark 13:6,22 Acts 20:29-30

1. The spirit of antichrist is now active in those who mislead professing believers.
2. You had been warned that this would happen. Acts 20:29-30
3. Their crucial error is in misrepresenting the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. v. 22 II John 1:7
4. Are there antichrists in our day?

III. The antichrist(ians) have left the church. v. 19

A. They went out from us. v. 19a Acts 20:29-31a

1. They had been part of the fellowship of believers (in an external sense).
2. Then they chose to abandon us. John 13:30 6:66f 16:21
3. Apostasy of professing believers is addressed elsewhere. Mark 4:1-20 Heb. 6:4-8

B. Their departure demonstrates that they were never truly part of us.

1. John is not teaching that these people lost their salvation.
2. Rather, in spite of outward appearances, they never truly had it. Mt. 7:21-23 John 13:10 6:70
3. Their departure demonstrates their true nature.
4. God has deliberately exposed them as frauds. Luke 12:2
5. Is there any hope for those who have departed in this way. Heb. 6:6

C. This verse teaches the doctrine of the *perseverance of the saints*. Phil. 1:6

1. The perseverance of the saints is because of the preservation of God.
2. Because salvation is God's work, a true believer can never lose his or her salvation. John 6:37,44 10:27-28
3. Those whom God has truly saved will persevere in faith and obedience. 2:3
4. Those who turn away from the faith were never truly saved.
5. While it is God who preserves us, we have a duty to persevere. 2:24 Phil. 2:12-13 II Co. 13:5 Heb. 3:12-14 Mt. 24:13

- D. This verse also instructs us concerning the nature of the church.**
1. There is a both a visible and an invisible church.
 2. Membership in the visible church does not guarantee participation in the visible church. Rom. 9:6
 3. We will not be able to fully separate the wheat from the tares in this age. Mt. 13:24f II Ti. 2:19
 4. Membership (active participation) in the visible church is very important. Heb. 10:24-25 13:17
 5. Departure from the visible church is a very serious matter.

E. Application:

1. A healthy body expels foreign objects.
2. Sometimes schism is part of God's purpose.
3. If your church has abandoned Christ, it is time for you to find a faithful church.
4. If you are in a church which is accurately proclaiming Christ and is faithful to the Word of God, hang in there!
5. If you are outside of the church, you are in a precarious position. Heb. 10:24f 13:17

IV. You are *Christians* who know the truth. v. 20-21

A. John offers encouragement to his readers concerning their status

B. You have been anointed by the Holy Spirit. v. 20a

1. There is a significant play on words in the Greek: in contrast to the *anti-christs*, you are the *christened* ones.
2. The Spirit indwells you and guides you according to the truth. John 14:17,26 15:26 16:13 II Co. 1:21-22 Eph. 1
3. True knowledge comes, not by mere human intellect, but by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. I Co. 2:13-14

C. You know the truth and can discern error. v. 20b-21 John 8:32 Jer. 31:34

1. The false teachers claimed to have a special anointing which gave them secret knowledge.
2. Yet all of you are the true anointed ones who have the knowledge of God in Christ.
3. You can recognize and stand up against the lies of the antichrists. Jo. 8:44 II Th. 2:9
4. We who have the Spirit are wiser than the great scholars of our age. Mt. 11:25-26 I Co. 2:12-15 Ps. 119:99

V. Concluding applications.

Discussion questions

1. In what sense does John mean it is the last hour? v. 18a
2. Who is the Antichrist? When will he come? v. 18b
3. Who are the antichrists? What characterizes them? v. 18c
4. Why is division sometimes good and necessary for the church? v. 19
5. What does verse 19 teach about the doctrine of "The Perseverance of the Saints"?
6. What does verse 19 teach about the nature of the church in this age?
7. Why is John confident his readers will overcome the antichrists? v. 20-21
8. What is the nature of the anointing? v. 20
9. How does John use a play on words in verse 20?
10. What antichrists are in the world today?