

1 John 2:18-27 | Antichrists Vs. Anointing

Verse 18

- Children, it is the last hour
 - Eschatological (Incarnation, Cross, resurrection, Ascension, Church)
 - John got this idea from Jesus (**imminence—about to happen**)
 - Matthew 24:36^a,42-44 (NASB)
 - 36 But of that day and hour **no one knows...**
 - 42 Therefore **be on the alert, for you do not know** which day your Lord is coming.
 - 43 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house **had known at what time** of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.
 - 44 For this reason **you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.**
 - We live in the **tension** of the last hour (**that is both good and bad**)
 - Tension in timing and tension in tenor
 - “the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining” (2:8)
 - Cf. Dawn
 - Tension
 - Unclear
 - Darkest

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NLT)

- 1 You should know this, Timothy, that **in the last days there will be very difficult times.**
- 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred.
- 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good.
- 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God.
- 5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

Behavioral darkness and doctrinal darkness (+ deception)

Matthew 24:3-5 and 11-12 (NASB)

- 3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”
- 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.
- 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.
- 11 Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.
- 12 Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.”

1 Timothy 4:1 (NLT)

Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that **in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.**

This is what John is talking about in verse 18

- “(A)ntichrist is coming” (the world [*cosmos*] is heading this way)
- “even now many antichrists have arisen”
 - “antichrists” = adversaries to the true identity of Jesus (cf. v 22)
- “from his we know that it is the last hour”
 - One of the evidences that the darkness is passing away is that
 - **Jesus has become the main target:**
 - **Perversions** of His identity (every philosophy and religion has its version)
 - **Prohibitions** of His name (what else can you not talk about in school and at work?) (cussing)
 - **Persecutions** of His people (what other religious people are being slaughtered for their beliefs?)

Living in the dawn (with Christ as the rising sun) is going to create conflict and confusion

- Dark and light do not coexist (one pushes the other back)
- Lots of gray area—gray cannot remain (June gloom)
- What makes the distinction is the **identity of Christ**
- **Verse 19**
 - John is saying in verse 19 that there are those who are in and those who are out
 - Depends on what you believe about Jesus
 - Dark/Light
 - “they went out from us, but they were not really of us”
 - In this case, the heretics went out on their own volition, but there was a divine purpose in it
 - “in order that it **might be shown that they all are not of us**”
 - JW; Mormons; Christian Science; New Age; Hinduism; Islam; Unitarianism; Free Masonry; Astrology
 - **Verse 22-23**
 - **Counterfeits** will be revealed (strategy of Satan and nature of a counterfeit)
 - ... even **within** the church
 - **Matthew 24:24-25 (NASB)**
For false Christs (Messiahs) and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance.

This (verse 19) brings up 2 important doctrines

- 1. The perseverance of the saints
 - **But the one who endures to the end will be saved.** (Matthew 24:13)
 - Not because salvation is the reward for endurance, but because endurance is the hallmark of the saved¹
 - If the false teachers “**had been of us, they would have remained with us**”
 - I.e. They never believed correctly in the first place
 - “**Faith that fizzles before the finish was faulty from the first**”
 - Cf. **Matthew 13** (Parable of the seed and the sower)
 - **For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.** (Hebrews 3:14)
 - As John Calvin said, “**Those who fall away have never been thoroughly imbued with the knowledge of Christ but only had a slight and passing taste of it.**”
- 2. The nature of the church universal (visible and invisible)
 - The church is supposed to be visibly manifest (worshipping, witnessing, obeying, professing, baptized members)
 - But not all those who appear to be members of the church are truly members of Christ
 - **2 Timothy 2:18-19 (NLT)**
They have left the path of truth... But God’s truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: “The LORD knows those who are his,” and “All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil.”
 - **All who belong to the Lord must turn away from evil** = the visible church
 - **The LORD knows those who are his** = the invisible church (only God can see it truly)
 - **See: Matthew 7:13-27**

Verses 20-21

- 1 John 2:20-21 (NLT)
 - 20 But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth.**
 - 21 So I am writing to you not because you don’t know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies.**

¹ John Stott, *The Letters of John* (TNTC) (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1964, 1988), 109.

How do they know the difference between truth and lies?

- ... the Holy One has given you his Spirit (v. 20)
 - John 14:16-17 + 26
 - 16** I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;
 - 17** that is **the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.
 - 26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**
 - John 15:26
 - When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me
 - John 16:13-14
 - 13** But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.
 - 14** He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.
- This work of the Holy Spirit is what John is getting at in **verse 27** (which see)
 - Descriptive of the Holy Spirit not all believers (or all people) at all times
 - 2 Reason:
 - 1. Jesus appoints teachers in His church (**Eph 4**)
 - 2. We now have the full canon of Scripture (**Hebrews 4**)
 - The Holy Spirit uses the Word and people to teach
 - But He also teaches you directly and helps you discern the truth from the lie
 - He speaks to you!
 - But **His vocabulary** is Scripture: “He will bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

John draws this hard distinction—profound juxtaposition: **Them and Us**

- They are antichrists
 - We have an anointing from Christ
- They went out from us
 - We abide in Christ
- They were false teachers
 - We have the Holy Spirit as our teacher
- They denied that Jesus is the Messiah
 - We know the truth about Jesus
 - Jesus is the Truth (**John 14:6**)
 - The Word is the Truth (**John 17:17**)
 - The Spirit of Truth (**John 16:3**)
- Antichrists vs. Anointing
 - The spirit of the age is antichrist
 - Who is your teacher? (The spirit of the age or the Holy Spirit?)
 - Where and in what are you dwelling (**abiding**) and what is dwelling in you?

Verses 24-25

As for you...

John is riffing on what he heard and recorded Jesus say in **John 15:1-11**

In days of great opposition and deception... **abide** (live, dwell) (**abode** is its noun)