



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: 1 John 2:18, 26-3:3

Bible Reading: 1 John 2:18; 2:26-3:3

¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come...²⁶ I have written these things to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you. Instead, his anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie; just as it has taught you, remain in him.

²⁸ So now, little children, remain in him so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you know this as well: Everyone who does what is right has been born of him. **3**¹ See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children —and we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know him. ² Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we will be like him because we will see him as he is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. (1 John 2:18; 2:26-3:3 CSB)

SUMMARY: John's letter transitions from warning about 'many antichrists' to highlighting the glorious destiny awaiting God's children, who will be transformed into the likeness of Christ when He appears. With John there is a clear dichotomy between the coming of the Antichrist and the appearance of Christ. In contrast, many Christians today remain preoccupied with Antichrist, end-time events and timelines, trying to predict the dates and discern signs of Christ's return. These efforts are destined to fail. Jesus clearly stated that no one knows, nor can know, the time of His return. Instead of eagerly anticipating Christ's return, many are fixated on the rise of an 'Antichrist' and the portents of

Armageddon. Jesus displays no interest in who gets the date right; He cares about our relationship with Him and our service for Him. Let's heed John's call to 'live deeply in Him,' motivated by the anticipation of Jesus' imminent return and the transformational event of seeing Him face-to-face.

Discussion:

1. John Piper writes: "Paul shows us quite explicitly that it is right to discern what *events must precede the Lord's coming*... [Paul says] "Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, & the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2 Thess. 2:3). Paul's answer...to the question, '*What events are yet to happen before Christ comes?*' is twofold: (1) *the rebellion must come, & (2) the man of lawlessness must be revealed. These 2 events are still to come, as I write in... 2021.*"
–John Piper
 - a. So, in John Piper's view, could Jesus return today? Is Jesus' coming 'imminent,' in the sense that it could happen 'at any moment, even today'? Why or why not? Discuss.
 - b. According to J. Piper, what events must transpire before Jesus can return?
 - c. Does J. Piper's view motivate us to wait for Jesus' appearing/coming or something else?
 - d. Do John's Gospel & Letters, especially 1 Jn. 2:28-3:3, support J. Piper's view? Why or why not?
2. 1 John 2:28 exhorts us to 'remain' ('abide,' 'stay,' 'lived deeply') in him (Christ) with a view to his 'appearing.'
 - a. If we do 'remain in him' what outcome is expected at Christ's 'appearing/coming'?
 - b. If we do *not* 'remain in him' what outcome is expected at Christ's 'appearing/coming'?
3. For Christ-believers there is both an 'already' aspect and a 'not yet' aspect to being a 'child of God' in 1 Jn. 3:1-2.
 - a. What is the 'already' (now) aspect of being a 'child of God' in 1 Jn. 3:1-2a?
 - b. What is the 'not yet' (future) aspect of being a 'child of God' in 1 Jn. 3:2b?
4. 1 Jn. 3:2b says: "When he appears, *we will be like him because we will see him* as he is."
 - a. This is a promise that we will see Jesus in his glory face-to-face. Try to imagine what that will be like (Think of the song: '*I can only imagine*' by MercyMe)
 - b. In this verse 'because' can be considered causal; our seeing Jesus will do something to us. What will it do?
 - c. Consider this quote from Karen Jobes: "*when [Jesus] returns, the full glimpse of his identity... will transform [our] every desire, every motivation, every impulse.*" Discuss.
5. Consider this quote: "*We shall be like him' (3:2) But 'like' does not mean 'identical to,' believers will never be omniscient or omnipotent as Christ is, since he is both God & man.*" [ESV note] Some the church fathers talked about believers *becoming 'like God' in terms of 'divinization' or 'deification,' theosis* in Greek. Do you see any danger in the use of such terms? Discuss.