

AntiChrist: We've Got It All Wrong!

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Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: 1 John 2:18-23, 26 CSB

¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard that *Antichrist* is coming, even now many *antichrists* have come. By this we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us. ²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. ²¹ I have not written to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth. ²² Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the *Antichrist*: the one who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father; he who confesses the Son has the Father as well...I have written these things to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you" (2:18-23, 26)

SUMMARY: The Antichrist is often depicted as the ultimate evil figure in end-times narratives: a dictator who amasses power through deceit and miracles, demanding global worship in opposition to God. Many Christian books and movies blend various NT figures, such as false Christs, false prophets, Paul's 'man of lawlessness,' and the Beast from Revelation, labeling them all as 'the Antichrist.' This approach is flawed; Scripture does not designate any of these figures as the Antichrist. Critics call this amalgam an "Antichrist stew."

Only John's letters use the term 'antichrist,' and they define it very differently. In 1 and 2 John, the Antichrist is a spirit working through John's adversaries, denying Christ's incarnation. There isn't one future Antichrist but many antichrists, already active within the church, not outside in the world. John's vision calls for a shift in focus: Christians need vigilance now to discern the Spirit of truth from the spirit of error within Christianity & their own churches, rather than scanning the horizon of world events for an emerging autocratic Antichrist.

Discussion

1. John proclaimed "it is the last hour" & that "many antichrists" had emerged (2:18). But obviously it was not "the last hour" of the Christian era, since its now 2,000 years later. So, John was mistaken." Discuss.
2. Prior to this message, what was your concept/understanding of "the Antichrist"? Does John's teaching on "the Antichrist" match or modify your understanding? In what way(s)? Discuss.
3. A significant group of members evidently departed from John's church (2:19); why did John appeal to traditions related to the end-times & Jesus' return to address issues raised by their departure? Discuss.
4. What are the differences (& relationship) between "the Antichrist," & the "many antichrists"? Discuss.
5. Read 2:19 above: "They went out from us, but they did not belong to us..." Does this description imply that these people were [1.] 'False Christians' & never genuine believers in Christ or [2.] Genuine believers who 'fell away,' departing from the faith, or [3.] something else [what?]. Discuss.
6. Consider the table below comparing John's "antichrists" & Paul's "man of lawlessness (sin)." Are these passages describing the same end-time figure? What are the key differences? Discuss.

• **Table: Contrasts John's "Antichrist(s)" vs. Paul's "Man of Lawlessness (Sin)" (2 Thess. 2:1-12)**

John's "Antichrists"	Paul's "Man of Lawlessness(Sin)"
• The Last Hour has come...now"	'The Day of the Lord' has... not come'
"Many antichrists"	One – " <i>the man</i> of lawlessness..."
Out of John's church(es)	Out of the world
Religious sphere: "Christians"	Political/Social sphere
Deny/oppose: <i>anti</i> -Christ	Replace/substitute: <i>pseudo</i> -Christ
Deny Christ came in flesh	Seeks worship as god/God
Work via words (false prophets)	False signs & wonders
Deceiving the believers	Deceiving the unbelievers
"Spirit of Antichrist/Error"	"by Satan's Activity"