

# AntiChrist: We've Got It All Wrong!

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Antichrist: We've got it all Wrong!

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

**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.

### The Precipitating Event — Rupture in John's Church (1 Jn. 2:19)

- A. Departure of a Sizeable Group – "They went out from us..." (2:19)
- B. Voluntary Departure; Not Excommunication
- C. Not over non-essential Matters (e.g. Paul & Barnabas Acts 15:36-40)
- D. Dispute over an Essential Doctrine – Person of Christ (1 Jn. 2:22; 4:2-3)
- E. 'Secessionists' never were genuine Christ-believers (2:19)
- F. Harsh Denunciation – "Liars, Deniers, Deceivers, Antichrists, false prophets" (2:22-3, 26; 4:1) Church Rupture: Spiritual Forces behind Human Agents (1 Jn. 4:1-6)
- G. 'Antichrist' – a Power, a Person, or a Spirit?

### Antichrist: Christians have it all Wrong!

- "John never speaks of 'the Antichrist' as an evil end-time [human] individual at all." — Jonathan Menn

- A. Popular Contemporary Concepts of Antichrist
- B. "The term *antichristos* ['Antichrist'] ...*is solely found in the Johannine epistles*" —Paul Anderson
- C. The Church Fathers' 'Antichrist' —beginnings of "Antichrist Stew"
- D. Contemporary Christians' Composite — an "Antichrist Stew"
- E. Conflating End-time Figures with John's 'Antichrist'
- F. John's Antichrist conflated with Paul's 'Man of Lawlessness (Sin)' (2 Thess. 2:3-4)
- G. 1 John addresses 'Antichrist(s),' not 'false-Christ(s)' (*pseudo*-Christ(s))
- H. Ongoing Impact of 'Antichrist Stew'

## Antichrist: John's Unique Portrait

- A. Antichrist & the 'last hour' (2:18)
- B. What John's Community knows about the Antichrist
- C. John: 'The Antichrist' & 'many antichrists'
- D. The one Antichrist inspires the many antichrists
- E. Antichrists emerge from the Church —John's Christian community (1 Jn. 2:19)John's conclusion based on the Church Split
- F. What do John's Antichrists do?
- G. The Antichrist is a Spirit, working via false prophets/teachers as a collective force for Evil
- H. Is there a Climactic End-time Antichrist?

## Applications

- A. When people leave the church is that always a bad sign? Was John discouraged because people left? Why not?
- B. Trouble happens in the Church. Don't expect the church to be always peaceful, harmonious, & growing.
- C. The Church goes thro' seasons —peaceful/growing & conflict/trial/split. John's church is under spiritual attack.
- D. Can you go thro' all seasons? Or will you 'drop out' or stay? Are you equipped to survive and persevere?
- E. Can you discern the spiritual forces behind church turmoil/conflict? Can you discern crucial/essential truths?
- F. The Church does not seek unity (including all views) at all costs. At times unity is sacrificed for the sake of truth

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

### John's "Antichrists"

The Last Hour has come...now"  
 "Many antichrists"  
 Out of John's church(es)  
 Religious sphere: "Christians"  
 Deny/oppose: *anti*-Christ  
 Deny Christ came in flesh  
 Work via words (false prophets)  
 Deceiving the believers  
 "Spirit of Antichrist/Error"

### Paul's "Man of Lawlessness(Sin)"

'The Day of the Lord' has... not come'  
 One — "*the man* of lawlessness..."  
 Out of the world  
 Political/Social sphere  
 Replace/substitute: *pseudo*-Christ  
 Seeks worship as god/God  
 False signs & wonders  
 Deceiving the unbelievers  
 "by Satan's Activity"

