

Study Notes: 1 John 2:18-29
July 26, 2020: “This IS the Last Hour”
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Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

- Addressing his readers as children, John stated that this is the last hour. The Greek phrase translated as “this is the last” is *eschatos* from where the English word, “eschatology,” (study of the last things or end times) is derived. The idea of hour was paralleled to the words of Jesus in John’s Gospel. Jesus referred to the time when He would be crucified as His hour (see John 7:30, 8:20 for example). Putting these concepts together, “the last hour,” refers to the appointed time which will occur before the end of time when Christ returns.
 - The Expositor’s Bible Commentary notes, “Looking at his situation, it seemed to John that the world was going from bad to worse, with godless people and heretics gaining ground on all sides. In light of the general ancient view that the forces of evil would gather at the end of time to make a final stand against God’s people, John could reasonably conclude that ‘the last hour’ was at hand. The focus is not on a timeline but on the urgency of a situation in which Christians must fight to preserve their identity.”
 - The New American Commentary adds, “This last hour, viewed as a theologically technical term, denotes a period of time, whether long or short, that will usher in the termination of all time and the revealing of the final salvation promised by God.”
- In John’s time, a common saying was that the antichrist would appear at the end of the last hour as an adversary to Jesus, the Christ. The antichrist is a figure described in other places, in both the Old and New Testament. In Daniel 7, the antichrist is the little horn. In the New Testament, the antichrist is described as the man of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4) or the beast (Revelation 13). However, John made clear that many antichrists had already come. There were many adversaries who stood against Jesus (antichrist literally means “against Christ”), who John would describe as deniers of Jesus Christ and sought to lead others astray.
 - Biblical scholar, James Boice, notes, “The word ‘antichrist’ occurs in the Bible only in the letters of John, and that only five times in four verses (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7); but though the word is infrequent the idea of antichrist is frequent and is an important one. It is part of a widespread belief in John’s day that at the end of history there was to be a final struggle between the forces of good, focused in God, and the forces of evil, focused in a being of superior intelligence and cunning.”
- The fact that many antichrists have come, is proof that we are living in the last hour, because Jesus offered this as a sign of the end times. As Matthew 24:23-25 states, “At

that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time.”

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

- To help his readers understand who the antichrists are, John explained that they will appear to be disciples, but this will only be an illusion. They will not remain in the truth, but will drift from it to false teaching, showing that they are not truly followers of Christ to begin with.
- The Expositor’s Bible Commentary explains, “Although the Antichrists once appeared to be genuine Christians, their subsequent behavior has revealed that they were actually full of darkness all along.”
- The New American Commentary suggests that there was a good reason for this group to be removed from the fellowship, “The believers who have remained in the community can take heart that God has precipitated these events to remove this group that held to a heretical Christology so that the church would be purified and educated.”

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

- In order to describe the difference between believers and antichrists, John spoke of the “anointing from the Holy One.” This may be a reference to either the Holy Spirit or even the Word of God. It can be explained this way: we have been given the Holy Spirit, whose ministry is to lead us into truth. The truth is contained in the Word of God and in Jesus Christ. Lies and truth do not coexist.
- Unlike believers, antichrists are liars, because they deny that Jesus is the Savior and the Son of God. In doing so, they deny the work of God the Father and His Son. It is impossible to deny the Son and know the Father. This is the clearest definition of an antichrist in Scripture, someone who denies Jesus as the Savior, and teaches others to do the same. In fact, such a person also forfeits a relationship with God.
- The New American Commentary says, “For John the height of heresy is to deny that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and Savior. To reduce Jesus to the status of a mere man, or to allow no more than a temporary indwelling of some divine power in him is to strike at the root of Christianity. Modern thinkers may have more refined ways of stating similar denials of the reality of the incarnation. It may be doubted whether they are any more immune to John’s perception that they take the heart out of Christianity.”

As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—eternal life. I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

- John wrote this material about antichrists and the last days, so that we might stand firm in our faith and remain in Jesus Christ. Many are trying to lead Christians astray, and the only way to combat this teaching is to be led by the Holy Spirit to determine what is truth and what is a lie.
- When John made the statement, “you do not need anyone to teach you,” he was not suggesting that no one should teach others the word of God, instead he was contradicting the idea that we need some secret knowledge that can only be taught by another person. The Word of God is clear and the Holy Spirit can teach and guide us into truth (see John 16:13).

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

- John urged us to continue or abide in Jesus Christ. This will lead to confidence and being unashamed when the last hour ends, when Jesus returns. Just as Jesus is righteous, so those who act and follow His example are His followers. This provides a second test for where someone stands; followers of Jesus must live their lives as Jesus lived (see 1 John 2:5).