

**A Study on the Antichrist**  
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**1 John 2:18-26 NASB**

**(18.) Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. (19.) They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. (20.) But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. (21.) I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. (22.) Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. (23.) Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. (24.) As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. (25.) This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. (26.) These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.**

The antichrist is a widely debated topic amongst all of the end time views, the A-Millennial position has various views and the Pre-Millennial have their views, and likewise the Post Millennial. Everywhere you look there are various beliefs. However, when it comes to what the term “antichrist” means there is an agreement that it means: someone who is devoted to stopping (or denying) the will/truth of God from being carried out. Understanding this, we need to take another look at the Scripture, and Scripture alone in order to see what it states.

If I were to ask what book said the most about the “antichrist” many, if not most people would automatically point to the book of Revelation, which is written by the Apostle John (put this into safe keeping we will come back to this thought later). However, this answer is incorrect, nowhere in the Book of Revelation is the Greek word for antichrist (ἀντίχριστος) found. In fact when you do a search for the word, only the following verses contain this word from Genesis to Revelation:

**1Jn 2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.**

**1Jn 2:22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.**

**1Jn 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.**

**2Jn 1:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.**

We will also dive more into the significance of this later, however let's first note that we must keep all of these things in context. Context, context, context! This is so crucial to understanding anything. Allow the Scriptures to interpret themselves, let John tell us what he means. Something we must never do is forget that "1 John" is a letter. And because of this we must realize that the original readers understood exactly what John meant! So, let's look through the lenses of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church, because when we do this, we will understand what has been written. We must never remove a Letter from its Scriptural and Historical Context!

Today, the most popular view of the end times is what is found in the "Left Behind" series, which to be honest is a very exciting fictional series that keeps you on the edge of your seat just waiting to see what God is about to do next on earth. In this pre-millennial view there is the belief that the "antichrist" is going to be one man who will come to a position of world power, who will come from America, or Europe and lead us all to a One World Government away from the One and Only God, he also will have a false prophet who will work alongside him.

However, what I'd like to do is compare this thought to what John has to say in 1 & 2 John. Let's first start with verses 18-19:

**Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.  
(1 John 2:18-19 ESV.)**

Here as we begin to read these two verses we see that John begins his phrase with "it is the last hour". What the Apostle John is doing is he is comparing the times that they are going through then to what the End of time will be like. For a comparison of how this is done elsewhere in scripture, take a look at Matthew 24:

**And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.  
(Matthew 24:14-20 ESV.)**

This is another scripture that is taken by many to be strictly talking about the End times, however, as we read the very beginning it should be noted that Jesus is answering 3 Questions asked by the Disciples: 1. When will these things take place (the destruction of the Temple)? 2. When will the End of the age come? 3. What will be the sign of your coming?

When we keep Matthew 24:14-20 in the historical context we can see that this is a clear warning concerning 70 A.D. In this year Rome circled Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and crucified so many Jews that Josephus an eye witness of the event said they ran out of room, take a look at the eye witness account in his book: "*The Antiquities of the Jews*", or take a look

at the commentary on this section of scripture in the book located in our library: “*The Chronological Life of Christ*” By Mark E. Moore.

Furthermore, Jesus understood that as a result God would take his hand of protection away from the Jewish people because they had rejected His teachings, warnings, along with the Miracles that He had performed, and they ultimately rejected him by crucifying their Messiah on a Cross. As a result God took his hand of protection away from the Jewish people and used the Romans to judge them (as we often seen God do in the Old Testament).

So, when this time was to occur, that is when the Christians seen the signs of the Roman Army getting ready for war they were to immediately flee, if they were on their roof tops they weren't to go down into their homes to collect their belongings, for the Wrath of God was going to be poured out in full force. Jesus also warned them that they should flee before the Sabbath, why? Because the gates of the city were closed and LOCKED on the Sabbath, nobody could get out, thus Jesus warns them get out while you have time.

However as we read we see that there is also a tie in of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ:

**"But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.  
(Matthew 24:29-30 NASB.)**

Because of this combination it has become quite confusing in trying to decipher the text to determine what is being talked about. But we do see that there is a clear indicator that Jesus is making reference to multiple events. By Jesus doing this he is making a comparison of 70 A.D. and the Last Days of Earth. He is simply stating that there will be widespread rebelliousness, wickedness, and sinfulness present at the End of Time.

Thus, this is what John is doing here in his epistle of 1 John. Did they have antichrists around in his day? Yes! But he is also saying that they will be around at the end of time as well! Another illustration can be seen by what Paul tells Timothy:

**But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.  
Avoid such people.  
(2 Timothy 3:1-5 ESV.)**

Surely we do not deny that these events were present in the early church and are present now, and will grow even worse at the end of time? To conclude this thought, John states that the anti-Christ's were around then, and they will be around at the end of time as well!

But as we move along, let's focus more on this “antichrist”. First, where does this “antichrist” come from? Does he/she come from a world power? Will they gain such esteem and respect that they lead the whole world astray? Many assume this, but John doesn't mention anything about this in his letter. Notice verse 19:

**They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.**

**(1 John 2:19 ESV.)**

“They” is referring back to “anti-Christ”. But notice here where the anti-Christ are coming from. They aren’t coming from the world; they are coming out of the church. Over and over again in scripture we see that Satan is placing people in the church to wreck havoc among the church. Usually when a church splits, it is not because of people from the outside, it is because of the people on the INSIDE! To prove this point look at Matthew 13 we see the parable of the Weeds:

**Matthew 13:24-30 ESV**

**(24.) He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, (25.) but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. (26.) So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. (27.) And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' (28.) He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' (29.) But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. (30.) Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"**

Notice the topic being discussed is the “Kingdom of Heaven”, which John states in Revelation is the Church (Rev. 1:6-7). However notice that the kingdom (church) is made up of wheat (24), however there is more than just wheat that is located in the field, there are weeds. But how in the world do the Weeds get into the Church, which is the Field? In vs. 28 Jesus states that the enemy is responsible for planting the weeds into the church. The weeds are those who are “Christians” on the surface only, who do not have a heart change, who are doing the will and the work of Satan. They are the wolves that Paul warns the church about in Acts 20:28 (You need to take a look at this Acts passage as well, because we see that the wolves come from among the church itself, not from outside the church). Satan has always been in the business of trying to destroy the church, and he does it by destroying it **from within**. Which is where the antichrist comes from: **“They went out from us”**.

There is also a second question that needs to be asked, how many anti-Christ will there be? One? Two? Three? How many? When we begin to look back at 1 John we see that John states that there are many antichrists:

**1 John 2:18-19 NASB**

**(18.) Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. (19.) They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.**

Notice that John uses a plural word (meaning multiple) when talking about the antichrist: Vs. 18 – “Many” also in vs. 19 he uses the word “they” which refers back to “antichrist”. Now before we get too far ahead I’m sure that many are sitting here saying “Look at verse 18! Look at verse 18! It says clearly there is only going to be ONE antichrist”: “. . . just as you head **that antichrist** is coming...” How do we reconcile this? Is John stating that yes there are multiple antichrists around now, but in the last days it will be ONE? To best understand this we need to take a look at the letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> John and compare it to 1st John:

**For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.  
(2 John 1:7 NASB.)**

**Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.  
(1 John 2:18 NASB.)**

What John is doing here, is he is stating that many antichrist/deceivers are going out into the world. He goes on to say that should such an individual come into the midst of the congregation and not acknowledge that Jesus Christ came in the flesh then that person/individual is an antichrist, based upon his unbiblical view/belief/teaching of Christ. John is not stating that there is only “One” that will show up at the end of time, instead this is what “One” of them will look like!

Now if you don’t mind, I’d like to propose a question concerning the antichrist, and as I’ve said before this isn’t a salvational issue, anyways, here is my question: Should the “Anti-Christ” be a one man ruler who was going to come at the end of time and trick all humanity, why didn’t the Apostle John use the Greek word for Antichrist when he wrote the book of Revelation? The reason I ask is because this word is not found anywhere else except in his writings of 1 & 2 John. Likewise, why didn’t any of the other Apostolic writers use this same Greek word to warn us about this horrific future for the church?

And one cannot make the argument that they couldn’t do this, for the Apostolic writers do this with many other words (propitiation, justification, redemption), and specifically the word baptism. Baptism is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, & 1 Peter. Surely if they can mention the same Greek word all over the New Testament, **in the same way** they would have done the same thing by mentioning the Greek Word for “antichrist”, who was going to utterly destroy the church, this is just a thought to consider.

Now that we have discussed where the antichrist will come from and how many there will be. We need to ask “who in the world is John talking about when he uses the word ‘antichrist’?” This once again is where we must understand the historical context of 1 John. You see John is dealing with a lot of false teaching and heresies in the church at this time which is being taught and promoted by a group known as the “Gnostics”. W. Carl Ketcherside informs us about this group by telling us that:

The word “Gnostic” is from **gnosis**, knowledge. The Gnostics were “the knowing ones.” It was believed by the Gnostics that all matter was inherently evil and only spirit was good. Since the spirit was imprisoned in the body, and the body composed of matter the chief aim was to free or liberate the spirit. Taking their cue from the Greek mystery religions they taught that only by probing the depths and ascending the heights of knowledge, could that which was real be delivered from the material. This required an elaborate secret ritual coupled with painful, arduous and disciplined investigation and research into the mystical infinite wisdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

He goes on to state that,

Cerinthus was the first Gnostic leader whose name has come down to us. He lived in Ephesus where John apparently wrote his epistles. According to

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<sup>1</sup> Reese, Gareth, James and 1,2,3 John (Moberly, Scripture Exposition Books), 33-34

Eusebius, the father of church historians, John knew Cerinthus for what he really was. Cerinthus made a distinction between Jesus and the Christ, or Logos. He taught that Jesus was human, the son of Joseph and Mary. But Jesus increased in wisdom and favor with God, which he could not have done if he had been God, according to Cerinthus. (See Luke 2:52). When Jesus was thirty years of age, He had lived in such a state of purity that God adopted Him, publicly announcing that Jesus was His Son in whom He was well pleased. Upon this occasion the Christ (anointing) descended upon Him in the shape of a dove. Cerinthus reasoned that Jesus could not have been God prior to this as He did not have the Spirit of God until it descended upon Him. The Christ came upon him at John's baptism. He further contended that the Christ (Spirit) could not be killed or made to suffer pain. The human Jesus was nailed to the cross and endured agony but the Christ had withdrawn as He came, and was beyond the reach of men....The crux of the whole matter as it affected Christian faith lay simply in the fact that a Gnostic could not believe in the incarnation. It was impossible for such a person to admit that the pre-existent Logos was made flesh. This provided a real test.<sup>2</sup>

This test was demonstrated by John in 1 John 4:2-3:

**By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.  
(1 John 4:2-3 NASB.)**

You see, the Gnostics had a basic belief that Flesh was Evil and the Spirit was good, however they wouldn't confess that "Jesus Christ" came in the Flesh. They would confess that **Jesus alone** did, but the "Christ" was spirit, it was pure and holy. By denying that Jesus came in the flesh they denied the very Gospel and the divinity of Christ. To the Gnostics, Jesus in the flesh was **NOT** God, which, if it was true would yank the foundation for Christianity out from under it. After all Paul preached that: "**For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,**" **Colossians 2:9 NASB.**) As we can see the Gnostics, were the antichrist that John was writing about, for they were against the Divinity, and the Humanity of Jesus Christ.

However, with all of this in mind, we do not need to be scared that there will be a one world ruler who will rise from the east or the west, instead we must be aware of the weeds, or the antichrist's that are in our own midst that Satan has planted in the church to stall and to distort the will of God. We are called to hold to the truth, because only the truth of Jesus Christ will set us free. No wonder John ended the section with these words:

***As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.  
(1 John 2:24-25 NASB.)***

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 33-34

Do we have common Day examples of Antichrist? Yes we do!

1. **Jews:** they reject Jesus as their Messiah.
2. **Muslims:** reject that Jesus is Savior or Lord, believe he is only a prophet.
3. **Jehovah Witnesses teach:** “Also, there was a voice from the heavens that said: ‘This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.’” ([Matthew 3:16, 17](#)) After seeing and hearing what happened, John had no doubt that Jesus was sent by God. ([John 1:32-34](#)) At the moment when God’s spirit, or active force, was poured out upon him that day, Jesus became the Messiah, or Christ, the one appointed to be Leader and King.—[Isaiah 55:4](#).<sup>3</sup> (***Compare this to Gnosticism above, their beliefs are identical***).
4. **There are many more**

Thanks for Studying! Keep It Up!!!!

P.S. - If you have any questions, feel free to contact me via e-mail or by using the note cards in the back! I’m not here to stir arguments, and I don’t want you upset by someone presenting a different view, if things are never tested, we would never know if they worked or not. So, don’t get mad, just use this as an opportunity to double check or to strengthen what you believe.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.watchtower.org/e/bh/article\\_04.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/e/bh/article_04.htm) visited 8/6/2012