

# The First Epistle of John

## (Week 21 – 1John 2:18-23)

### I. Review:

#### A. Some identifying marks of false teachers

1. They tend to be popular (well-liked by all) – Luke 6:26
2. They are men-pleasers – Gal. 1:10; 1Thess. 2:1-4
3. They teach a ‘grace’ that overlooks immoral behavior (Jude 1:4)
4. They use verses to deny other verses (Satan in Matthew 4:6-7)
5. They distort the truth, drawing disciples to themselves (Acts 20:30)
6. \*Also, they tend to be smooth-talkers (Rom. 16:17-18).

### II. Avoid Spiritual Deception (part 2)

A. 1John 2:18-23, *“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. (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. (20) But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. (21) I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. (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. (23) No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”*

1. 1John 2:18-23, *“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.”*

a. **Question: What does John mean by “the last hour?”**

i. **Some explanations:**

- **The second coming of Christ**
  - **Objection:**
    - a. Jesus told His disciples that no one knows when Christ will return (Matthew 24:36, 42)
    - b. If this were referring to the second advent of Christ, coming in the near future, then why, over 1500 years later, has He not yet come?
- **The destruction of the Temple (70AD)**
  - **Objection:**
    - a. It is believed that 1John was written after 70AD.
    - b. If this is true, then he cannot be referring to the fall of Jerusalem, since it happened in 70AD.
- **The New Testament Era**
  - Hebrews 1:1-2 and James 5:3 addresses the current time as the “*last days*.”
  - This seems to fit, since the New Testament era goes on until the world ends and Christ returns.
- Also, “*the last hour*” implies a sense of urgency, in that Jesus may come at any moment!

## b. The Anti-Christ

### i. Simple definition:

- Anti – against; opposed to
- Christ – Messiah; The Anointed One
- Anti-Christ: That which opposes Christ

### ii. In the evangelical world:

- The anti-Christ is a future evil world ruler.
- However, John says in 1John 2:18 that “*many antichrists have come*”
- **Question: In context, who is the anti-Christ?**
  - The Gnostics!

### iii. Examples of anti-Christ teachings:

- They denied that Jesus is the Christ
  - 1John 2:22 (ESV), “*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*”
    - a. They acknowledge the existence of Christ (as many do today) but they deny that He is the Christ!
    - b. Some Gnostics made a distinction between Jesus and Christ:
      - i. They believed that Jesus was a natural son of Joseph
      - ii. At his baptism, the “Christ” entered him and left him before the crucifixion.
      - iii. This form of Gnosticism is called “*Cerinthianism.*”
    - c. Denying that Jesus was the Christ is a denial of both the Father and His Son whom He sent!
- They denied that Christ came in the flesh
  - 2John 1:7 (ESV) says, “*Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.*”
    - a. Certain Gnostic groups had certain views of Jesus:
      - i. Docetists believed that Jesus’ body was not human, that is, not of physical flesh.

## III. John gives us three guidelines to watch for:

### A. Beware: Satan works in the realm of religion

1. False teachers work start within the church.

### B. Beware of anyone who breaks from the church to form a new group with new theology!

1. 1John 2:19 (ESV), “*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.*”

### C. Beware of anyone offering “new truth” that the NT writers have missed!

1. 1John 2:21 (ESV), “*I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth*
2. The test of true Christianity is adherence and submission to what the Bible says!
  1. False teachers claim that they had been given a deeper level of truth than the average church member had experienced.