

Review

We are beginning our third study in the epistle of First John, and have arrived at chapter two, verse 18...

2:18 Antichrist

Antichrist is coming. When I say "antichrist," you no doubt think of the coming world dictator. (Maybe Nicolae Carpathia of the "Left Behind" book series rings a bell?)

There are many places in Scripture which refer to this person we call The Antichrist. In them, he is called such things as:

- the beast (Rev. 13:1-8)
- the man of lawlessness (2Thess. 2:3)
- the prince who is to come (Daniel 9:26)
- the little horn (Daniel 7:8-11)
- the Assyrian (Isa. 31:8)

But one thing he is not actually called in Scripture is "The Antichrist." We call him that because he will be of the spirit of antichrist. In fact, "antichrist" in Greek is the word "an-TEE-khris-tos." It means "against Christ," or "instead of Christ." And the Antichrist will certainly be placed in the eyes of the world as being in place of Christ, even while he is completely against Christ.

Many Antichrists

But John tells us there were many antichrists.

It certainly wasn't going to be very long after Jesus left the earth that people were going to start offering substitutes instead of Christ.

Jesus warned us about this before He left:

Matt. 24:24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

John said that there were already many antichrists who had appeared in his day.

2:19 They Were Not Of Us

John tells us, "Some of these people used to be part of our fellowship, but bought into some unbiblical ideas. Because these false doctrines led them down a path of lies that could not be reconciled with the truth, they couldn't stand to remain in fellowship with us and left."

Now, don't misunderstand or misquote this verse as many have. Just because somebody leaves a church doesn't mean they are of the spirit of antichrist. Over the last ten years, there have been many people who have chosen not to fellowship here anymore. But very few of those would I ever accuse of having an antichrist spirit!

This is a good reminder to keep Bible text in its proper context.

2:20-21 You Know

John says, "Besides, you guys all know already."

- What do we know? We know the difference between truth and lies.
- How do we know this? Because of the anointing we have.

Now, lots of Christians talk about "the anointing," but it is often used incorrectly. I hear, "May God anoint you to do this," or "She has a special anointing for that ministry," or "We're going to pray that you receive an anointing for this work."

What does "anointing" even mean? Literally, it is to rub or pour oil on something. In Scripture, several things were anointed with oil. The sin offering, the tabernacle, and everything else that was inside of it, including the ark, the laver, etc.

This anointing represented their consecration, that they were set apart, dedicated, sanctified, for holy use.

In addition to these things, the priests, the high priest, and the king were anointed with oil, having it poured on their heads. Elisha the prophet was also anointed (1Kings 19:16). Biblically, the only people that were anointed with oil were prophets, priests, and kings.

An interesting fact is that the word "anoint" in Hebrew is "**Maw-SHAKH**." That should sound somewhat familiar to you, since "**Maw-SHEE-akh**," or "Messiah" as we say, means "anointed one." Jesus Christ is most deserving of the title "anointed one" because He is all three: a Prophet, a Priest (our High Priest), and a King!

Now, there is a strong tie-in between someone being anointed with oil symbolically, and the Holy Spirit being poured out upon them spiritually. Jesus was anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit for ministry (Isa. 61:1). Peter preached,

Acts 10:38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

This was true of David as well:

1Sam. 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward...

This is the anointing John is talking about. We have an anointing from the Holy Spirit, Who enables us to discern truth. That's because...

John 14:26 "...the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

When we are born again, we were anointed by the Holy Spirit, who ministers to our hearts what teaching is true and what teaching is false.

2:22-25 Denying Jesus

Liars are those who lie. And the greatest lie which can be told to anyone is to deny that Jesus Christ is God, the Son. Because in lying about this, the person is robbed of any hope of being saved. Because Jesus told us,

John 8:24 "...unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins."

The antichrist spirit is in every teacher of false doctrines who claims that Jesus isn't God. John says that Jesus is the key. You can't be saved if you deny the Son. But if you confess the Son, you have the Father also.

Jesus said,

John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he

who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Jesus has made to us the promise of eternal life. And it's all based on faith in the fact that God gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins. The worst liars in hell will be those who taught others to deny the deity of Jesus.

2:26-27 Abide In Him

False teachers were abounding, and it was cause for concern for John. He was worried about us in the church, his "little children." But he reassured himself that those who had received the Holy Spirit and were abiding in Him would not be deceived.

Abiding is essential, and John mentions the word more than 20 times in this short letter. It means "to stay, to remain, not to depart."

Consider your walk with God today: Are you abiding? Have you decided to stick it out with Jesus? Or are you wandering, drifting aimlessly? If so, false teaching could sweep you away. Stick close to Him, and you won't drift away from the truth.