

Introduction

We are in a period called the last days or the last hour, and one of the hot topics that many people talk about is the return of Christ. On one of my walks a few weeks ago, one of my neighbors stopped me to talk about the return of Christ. He mentioned it could come any day, even this week. I have heard a number of different pastors speak confidently about his soon return. One comment I recently heard a pastor make is that we don't have to be concerned about the coming troubles in the world is that we are not going to be here. We are going to be raptured, and won't have to deal with it.

Another hot topic for many years has been the identity of the antichrist. This has been going on for thousands of years. The early Christians speculated that Nero was the antichrist. He persecuted Christians, and his name in Hebrew, gematria, corresponds to the number, "666." The early Christians also speculated about Domitian. He also persecuted believers, and demanded worship of the emperor. Some of the early Protestant Reformers thought that Pope Leo X was the antichrist. They claimed the papacy was fulfilling antichrist prophecies. Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Saddam Hussein, and many others have been suggested as the antichrist.

In our passage today, John wrote that there are actually many antichrists. There is an antichrist that will be revealed before Christ's return, but there are many antichrists. John gave three characteristics of these antichrists. Why did John write about this? In verse twenty-six, he said, "These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you." John did not want people being deceived, so he gave three characteristics of these antichrists who were trying to deceive them. He wanted believers to recognize these antichrists, and not to be deceived by them.

(1 Jn 2:26) "These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you."

John did not just give the characteristics of these antichrists, he also exhorted the believers to abide in Christ. He gave three ways for them to abide in Christ. John wants people to abide and fellowship with God. That theme is repeated throughout the epistle.

At the end of the passage, he wrote, "abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." John was preparing believers in this last hour for the return of Christ. First, John did not want them deceived. Second, he wanted them to abide in Christ. We are further into this last hour than when he wrote, and this message is even more relevant today than when he wrote it.

Preparing for the Return of Christ (1 Jn 2:18-29)

1. Do not be deceived by the antichrists

- a. Recognized by their going out from us
- b. Recognized by their denial that Jesus is the Christ
- c. Recognized by their attempt to deceive

2. Abide in Christ

- a. Let the Word of God abide in you
- b. Let the Holy Spirit abide in you
- c. Walk in the Light

(1 Jn 2:18–29) “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. {27} As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. {28} Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. {29} If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.”

1. Do not be deceived by the antichrists

John begins our passage writing, “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.” In verses one and twelve, John addressed the believers as “my little children.” The Greek word is *teknion* (Strong’s G5040). This is a nursery term, and refers to small children, and is an affectionate address. The word used in verse eighteen is *paidion* (Strong’s G3813), and it also refers to a small child. However, it carries the sense of an undeveloped understanding. John is affectionately addressing believers who don’t yet have a good understanding or discernment about the antichrists, and he wants to give them understanding.

(1 Jn 2:18) “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.”

He said it is the last hour. The KJV renders it as the last time. The Greek word is *hora*, which refers a definite space or division of time recurring at fixed intervals, and is usually rendered as an hour, time, or season. Both the NASB and ESV translate it as the last hour. It is a time period, and we commonly refer to it today as the last days. We are in the last days. John tells us that we know that it is the last hour because many antichrists have appeared. Generally, when we think about the last days, we believe that they began with the death and resurrection of Christ.

In Acts 2:16-17, Peter is preaching at Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit has been poured out on the disciples. People thought they were drunk, but he tells them that it is the third hour, or nine o’clock in the morning, and that this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel. Then, he quotes Joel 2:28-29, saying, “‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy.’” The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was going to take place in the last days, so we generally mark this as the beginning of the last days.

(Ac 2:15–18) “For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is *only* the third hour of the day; {16} but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: {17} ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; {18} Even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy.”

Jesus taught that He would return. Paul also taught about Christ’s return. In both of his letters to the Thessalonians he taught about Christ’s return. He did not want them to be deceived. False teachers had told them that they had missed the boat, that He had already come. So, in his second letter, he tries to put them at ease about the coming of Christ, and helps them understand that Christ will not come until the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness, who is the son of destruction, is revealed. He did not want them deceived and shaken up by these false teachers.

(2 Th 2:1–3) “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, {2} that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. {3} Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,”

False teachers had even written a letter and put Paul’s name on it in order to deceive the Thessalonians. So, at the end of his letter, he explained that he writes the greetings at the end of his letters with his own hand, and that was a distinguishing mark in every letter. It was the way he wrote, and it was to prevent deception.

(2 Th 3:17) “I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.”

The believers knew that Christ was going to return, but before He returned, the antichrist would be revealed. John acknowledges that they have heard that the antichrist is coming. Then, he said that many antichrists have appeared. Generally, we don’t hear much about antichrists, just the antichrist. But there have been many antichrists, and there will be many more antichrists because we are in the last hour.

(1 Jn 2:18) “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.”

The word, antichrist (Strong’s G500), is a compound word, made up of anti and christos. The word anti has a couple of different meanings. The most common meaning is to be against something, or to be opposite. The second meaning is that it can be in addition to, or a substitute for. In Matthew 24:5 Jesus was teaching about the last days and His return. He did not want believers to be misled and deceived. He said, “See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.” He was referring to these antichrists, false Christs, who claimed to be Christ.

(Mt 24:4–5) “And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. {5} For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.”

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians so that they would not be deceived. John wrote with a similar purpose; he did not want them deceived. God does not want the church today to be deceived either. He wants us to have understanding. Paul focused on the events that must take place before Christ's return. John focuses on the characteristics of these antichrists.

(1 Jn 2:26) "These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you."

a. Recognized by their going out from us

The first characteristic of these antichrists is that they did not remain in the fellowship; they went out from among the saints. John wrote, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us." These were wolves in sheep's clothing. These were people who were not genuine believers. These were pretenders. John continued, saying, "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 are not of us."

(1 Jn 2:19) "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."

These were people like Judas, who was with Jesus for three plus years, and was never a believer. He could pray for people. He could heal people. He could talk the talk, but he was never a true believer, and in the end, he went out from among the disciples. He did not fool Jesus. John recorded that he carried the money belt for the group and he used to pilfer the money that had been given. Jesus knew that he was going to betray Him.

When Paul was meeting with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he exhorted them to be on guard for themselves and for the flock. Why? Because he knew that after his departure savage wolves would come in from among them, not sparing the flock, and from among themselves men would arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. These perverse men, these savage wolves, were in the flock, but they were not really of them. It may take years before they try to draw men after themselves, but at some point, they will do that.

(Ac 20:28–30) "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. {29} I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; {30} and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."

Paul wrote the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord would not come until the apostasy comes first. What is the apostasy? The Greek word is *apostasias* (Strong's G646), which is a compound word. *Apo* means away or from, with an idea of separation. The second word is *histemi*, which means to stand. The combination means to separate, or to defect from the truth. It is a deliberate abandonment of a formerly professed position or a defection. During this last hour, there will be those in the church that fall away from the truth, and in particular, the truth about the deity of Christ.

(2 Th 2:3) "Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,"

In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he wrote that "in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." The antichrist is a spirit and the antichrists are also spirits that influence or possess people. There will be those in the church that leave or fall away. We know by this that we are in the last hour.

(1 Ti 4:1) "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,"

As a pastor, I found that it was important to publish a doctrinal statement in our membership packet. When people wanted to join, we would ask them if they were in agreement with our doctrinal statement. If they were not in agreement, I asked them to clarify and let us know what they believe. It is better to spot these people before damage is done in a flock. I told many of them that they were welcome to come and learn, but they were not allowed to spread their teaching in our church. I told them they were not allowed to pray or prophesy over people. They could come and learn; anything beyond that was off limits for them. If they could not abide by those rules, I asked them not to come back. I had to be on guard for the flock that God had given to me to oversee.

b. Recognized by their denial that Jesus is the Christ

The second characteristic of these antichrists is that they deny the trinity. They deny that Jesus has come in the flesh. They deny that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ. They deny the Father and the Son are One. John wrote, "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. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."

(1 Jn 2:22–23) "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."

In the news this past week, there was a big stir caused by the reworked list of religious designations of service members. The military had 200 different faith groups and codes, and they whittled it down to thirty-one. They did not include the Mormons under the Christians, and the Mormon leaders in Congress were upset. Utah lawmaker, Mike Lee, said, "I find this offensive..." and he implored the Pentagon to reconsider. Sean Parnell, the Pentagon Press Secretary, responded, saying, "The Pentagon isn't making any claims on the legitimacy of any faith or religious belief, rather it is trying to streamline data collection and religious support for our soldiers, sailors, and airmen." The Church of the Latter-day Saints of Jesus Christ state that they are neither Catholic or Protestant." Senator John Curtis, also from Utah, stated that LDS members "are among the most patriotic, service-oriented individuals in our country, and unequivocally Christian – just look at who is in the name of the Church." Unfortunately, the LDS do not recognize the deity of Christ. They do not believe that the Father and the Son are one. According to John's epistle, this is a characteristic of the antichrists.

The Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet, but they deny that He is God in the flesh. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus is a god, but not God. They deny that the Father and Son are One. The Way does not believe in the deity of Christ, and they would also be considered antichrists.

I have had many that deny the deity of Christ come into the churches that I have pastored. The pastors in the church need to have their antennas up and to be on guard for the flock. They need to get to know the people that visit and want to join. I have found that church luncheons are great times to get to know those who are visiting. Asking them about their testimony and past church involvement are great springboards for finding out where they stand on issues.

c. **Recognized by their attempt to deceive**

What were these antichrists doing? They were trying to deceive believers, which is one of the reasons that John wrote this epistle. In verse twenty-six, he wrote, “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.” John wanted them to recognize these deceivers. The Greek word is *planao* (Strong’s G4105), which means to deceive, go astray, seduce, or wander. The KJV translates this as seduce. These antichrists were trying to seduce, lead astray, and deceive believers into believing their false doctrines.

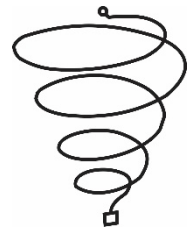
(1 Jn 2:26) “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”

Who were some of these antichrists that were trying to deceive and lead others astray? Gnosticism and Docetism were two prevalent false teachings that were attacking the church. They did not believe that Jesus had come in the flesh. They denied the deity of Christ. So, John is certainly addressing these groups, and calling them antichrists, because they deny that Jesus is the Christ, and that Father and Son are One. They had also brought in destructive teachings about the separation of spirit and body (material), saying that you could live however you wanted to in the flesh and that it would not affect your spirit or relationship with God. John has been emphasizing that if we are going to fellowship with God, we must walk in the light, not darkness.

Another false teacher at that time was Cerinthus. He denied the virgin birth of Jesus, and said that Jesus was not fully God and fully man. He also denied that the world was created by the Supreme God, but by a lesser power. His views were similar to the Gnostics, but not fully in line with them. Cerinthus does fit John’s definition of an antichrist, one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, and denies that the Father and Son are one.

2. **Abide in Christ**

The first exhortation was not to be deceived by the antichrists in the last hour. The second exhortation is to abide in Christ. He wove these into the text, rather than systematically covering one point at a time. John’s style of writing is not linear, but cyclical. He keeps circling back to earlier points. Instead of going from point A to B, then to C, and then to D, John goes A, B, C, D, A, B, C, D. Each time he circles around, he goes a little deeper or adds a little more understanding. In trying to depict this, R.C. H. Lenski, in his commentary, had a picture of spiraling circles that come back to the same center.



a. **Let the Holy Spirit abide in you**

John’s first exhortation of abiding is to let the Holy Spirit abide in you. He said, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. The KJV renders this as an unction from the Holy One. Believers have an anointing of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word is *chrisma* (Strong’s G5545), which means to smear or to anoint. When kings in the Old Testament were set into

office, the prophet or priest would anoint, smear, or rub this anointing oil on them. In the New Testament, when someone is ordained as an elder through the laying on of hands, they anoint the new elder with oil, symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

(1 Jn 2:20) “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.”

When a person becomes a believer, they receive an anointing of the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 1:13-14, Paul wrote that “after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance...” Believers receive an anointing from the Holy Spirit, and they keep that anointing. The Holy Spirit does not leave us; we have the Holy Spirit abiding in us.

(Eph 1:13–14) “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, {14} who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God’s own* possession, to the praise of His glory.”

Then, in verse twenty-seven, he said, “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”

(1 Jn 2:27) “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”

This verse needs to properly understood. God gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the church (Eph 4:11-13). He charges pastors to feed the flock (1 Pe 5:2, 1 Tim 5:17). God’s people need to be spiritually fed, and He charges His shepherds to teach them. Just because we have the Holy Spirit, does not mean that we no longer need others to teach us. At the same time, all of us can learn to study the word and to teach. In Colossians 3:16, Paul wrote, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” We are to teach one another.

(Col 3:16) “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul taught about how things should be conducted in our meetings. The priority was to be on the edification of the body, not individuals. There needed to be order, not chaos. When they assembled, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, etc. We should all be reading and studying our Bibles, and come prepared to share psalms and teachings with one another.

(1 Co 14:26) “What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”

Being able to teach is a sign of spiritual maturity. In Hebrews 5, believers are rebuked because they are still needing to be fed by others. They were being fed milk, because they had not learned

to eat meat, and to rightly divide the Word of God. We all have the Holy Spirit, and we need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us read, understand, and apply the Word of God in our lives.

(Heb 5:12–14) “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. {13} For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. {14} But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

One of the many reasons for the Protestant Reformation was the reading and studying of the Word of God. The Catholics believed that the church is the one to interpret the Bible. They did not want anyone else to have the Bible. Martin Luther wanted people to have the Bible in their own language, and to read and study the Word. One of the five Solas of the Reformation was “Sola Scriptura,” which means only by Scripture. (The others were Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Solus Christus, and Soli Deo Gloria.)

The Gnostics, and the word Gnostic comes from the Greek word, gnosis, which means to know, said that they had superior knowledge and revelation that others did not have. John is refuting this superior knowledge, saying that they have the Holy Spirit to teach them, and they don’t need these outsiders, these false teachers, these antichrists to teach them.

When I was in prison ministry, I went to visit a man named Samuel, which I did every week. On one particular day, he had read 1 John 2:27, and he said, “Bill, I don’t need for you to teach me anymore. I have been anointed by the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures say that I have no need for anyone to teach me.” I tried to give him some understanding of the verse that he was clearly taking out of context. Even though I am a gifted teacher, I love to hear the insights and teachings of others. I learn so much from others, and I am blessed by their teachings. It would be arrogant to think that I don’t need others to instruct me.

(1 Jn 2:27) “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”

b. Let the Word of God abide in you

John’s second exhortation of abiding in Christ is to let truth abide in you. In verse twenty-one, he said, “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. These believers knew the truth. They had been taught the truth. In John 17:17, Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” God’s truths are contained in his Word, so God wants His Word to abide in us. They knew the Word. The things they were hearing were lies, and were not truth. When we hear something, we should always run it through the filter of God’s Word. That is how we discern truth from error.

(1 Jn 2:21) “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.”

The specific area of truth that John is addressing is the deity of Christ. He asked, “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.” The Gnostics did not accept that Jesus was the Messiah, and that He and the Father were one. They did not accept the trinity.

(1 Jn 2:22) “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.”

Then he wrote, “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.” Jesus is the only way to the Father. If you reject Jesus, you reject God.

(1 Jn 2:23) “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.”

In the Gospel of John, Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” If you reject Christ, you cannot go to the Father, because Jesus is the only way to the Father. Jesus told His disciples that if they know Him, they know the Father. He said, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me. In that passage Jesus said that the words He spoke and the works that He did showed that He and the Father were one.

(Jn 14:6–11) “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. {7} “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”... {10} Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. {11} Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.”

Then John exhorted the believers to let that abide in them which they heard from the beginning. What had they heard in the beginning? They had heard the gospel. They had heard that Jesus was the Son of God, and had been sent by the Father to die for the sins of the world (Jn 3:16). He was the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). These believers had heard that He died for their sins and was raised from the dead.

(1 Jn 2:24) “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.”

John and the other apostles had witnessed the baptism of Jesus, where God spoke from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”

(Lk 3:21–22) “Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, {22} and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”

The apostles had witnessed the works that He had done, which testified that He and the Father were one. John had witnessed Jesus’ transfiguration, where again, the Father spoke from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him.”

(Lk 9:35) “Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!”

They had seen Jesus crucified, and buried. They had also met with the Lord on many occasions after He had risen from the dead. They had witnessed all these things and they had proclaimed them to others.

(1 Co 15:3–5) “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, {4} and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, {5} and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”

They shared the promise that Jesus made to them and to anyone who would believe, eternal life. This is what the believers had heard from the beginning. This is what John is telling them to let abide in them. Part of abiding in Christ is to let the Word of God abide in us.

(1 Jn 2:25) “This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.”

In John 8, Jesus taught that true disciples continue or abide in His Word, and will know the truth. Part of abiding is continually being in God’s word.

(Jn 8:31) “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine;”

In John 15, Jesus again taught the disciples to abide in Him, and to abide in his Word. The apostles recorded the words of Jesus included them in their gospel accounts. The believers at that time did not have the Bible as we have it. They did have the Old Testament, but not everyone had their own copy. They had the letters that Paul, Peter, John, and Luke had written. They had the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They had the word that they had heard from the beginning.

(Jn 15:7–10) “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.... {10} If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”

c. Walk in the Light

Finally, John encourages them to practice righteousness. He said, “Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.” Abiding in Christ has been the main exhortation. John wanted them to let His Word abide in them, to let His Spirit abide in them, and for them to practice righteousness.

(1 Jn 2:28–29) “Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. {29} If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.”

In chapter one, John spoke about having fellowship with Him. He said that God is Light and there is no darkness in Him. He said if we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. If we walk in the Light, as he Himself is in the Light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Sin and shame are things that would cause us to shrink away from Him at His coming. If we are practicing righteousness, that is, walking in the Light, we are forgiven and cleansed, and have fellowship. John did not say that we live sinlessly, but that we practice righteousness. When we sin, we are to confess those sins and receive his forgiveness and cleansing. Our lifestyle, the way we live our life, is to live righteously.

(1 Jn 1:5–7) “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. {6} If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; {7} but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Conclusion and Applications

Many years ago, at the church that I was pastoring in Kennesaw, GA, there was a man who kept pressing me to teach on the upcoming Y2K. He wanted me to be prepared, and to prepare the flock for this great catastrophic day. We had a men’s retreat and I taught on being prepared for the last days. As I went through Scripture, I saw that the best preparation that we can have is to be in a relationship with Christ, to be abiding in Him, and to be faithfully doing His work when He comes. This man became very angry with me for teaching this, and for ignoring the Y2K. About twenty years later I received a call from this man, who was now one of the elders in a church in Houston, TX. He called to apologize. He confessed how angry he had been at the time, but that I had been absolutely correct in what I taught.

In our passage today, John wanted the believers to be ready for the return of Christ. He did not want them shrinking back when He appeared. He told them not to be deceived in this last hour by the antichrists. He defined the antichrists, those who reject that Jesus is the Christ and that the Father and Son are one. He said that these antichrists did not remain with the church because it would show that they were not really one of us. He said that these antichrists were trying to deceive them.

In addition to identifying these antichrists, John exhorted the believers to abide in Jesus. He wanted the anointing of the Holy Spirit to abide in them, and the truth to abide in them. He wanted them to abide in the truth that they had heard in the beginning. Third, he exhorted them to practice righteousness, or walk in the light.

Today, if you have never placed your faith in Christ, I encourage you to receive Christ. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, that He came and died for our sins, and was raised from the dead, you simply need to receive Him. Ask Jesus to come into your life, forgive you of your sins, and then yield your life to Him by confessing Him as Lord of your life. When you do that, He promises to come into you. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit will come into you. You will have the anointing that John wrote about. The Holy Spirit will lead you and guide you into the Scriptures.

There may be some today that need a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. Even though we receive the Holy Spirit at salvation, we are to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. Let me encourage you to spend time worshiping the Lord. Spend time giving thanks to the Lord and singing praises to Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you in the Scriptures.

There may be someone today that is not practicing righteousness. You are walking in the darkness and you know that you are walking in darkness. If the Lord came back today, you would shrink back from the Lord. You would be ashamed of the things that you are doing. God does not want you to walk in darkness, but to walk in the Light and abide in Him. In 1 John 1:9, John told us what to do if we sin; we are to confess our sins to the Lord, who promises to forgive us and to cleanse us from all things. I encourage you to confess your sins today, and ask God to forgive you and to cleanse you. I encourage you to repent and to begin walking in righteousness.

There may be someone today that is not abiding in the truth. You are not abiding in God's Word. You are not reading it every day. You are not studying God's Word. You are not meditating on God's Word. Part of being prepared for Christ's return is to abide in the truth. Let me encourage you to find a good Bible reading plan, and to faithfully read His Word every day. Internalize it as you read. Let the word of God richly dwell within you. Apply His Word in your daily life. Abide in His word. Jesus said that those who abide in His Word are truly His disciples.

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for this passage. Help us to be alert and not to be deceived. Help us to recognize those that try to deceive us. Help us to abide in You. I ask You to fill us afresh with Your Holy Spirit. Help us to abide in Your Word. I pray that Your Word would richly dwell within us. I pray that we will abide in You and walk in the Light as Jesus walked in the Light. Help us to be prepared for the return of Christ, and not to shrink back in that day. May we be filled with joy and excitement on that day when Christ returns. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- What is the difference between the antichrist and the antichrists?
- How did John define the antichrists?
- What antichrists have you come across in your life? How did you recognize that they were antichrists?
- What are some indications that the Holy Spirit is abiding in you?
- What are some things that the Holy Spirit has been recently teaching you?
- What are some ways to abide in the truth?
- What would cause a person to shrink back in shame at the return of Christ?
- What are some ways that we will have confidence in the day of His return?

Preparing for the Return of Christ

Introduction (1 Jn 2:26, 1 Jn 2:18–29)

1. Do not be deceived by the antichrists (1 Jn 2:18, Ac 2:15-18, Joel 2:28-29, 2 Th 2:1-3, 3:17, Mt 24:4–5, 1 Jn 2:28, 2:26)

- a. Recognized by their going out from us (1 Jn 2:19, Ac 20:28–30, 2 Th 2:3, 1 Ti 4:1)
- b. Recognized by their denial that Jesus is the Christ (1 Jn 2:22–23)
- c. Recognized by their attempt to deceive (1 Jn 2:26)

2. Abide in Christ

- a. Let the Holy Spirit abide in you (1 Jn 2:20, Eph 1:13–14, 1 Jn 2:27, Eph 4:11-13, 1 Pe 5:2, 1 Tim 5:17, Col 3:16, 1 Co 14:26, Heb 5:12-14)
- b. Let the Word of God abide in you (1 Jn 2:21-25, Jn 17:17, 14:6-11, Lk 3:21–22, 9:35, 1 Co 15:3–5, Jn 8:31, 15:7-10)
- c. Walk in the Light (1 Jn 2:28–29, 1 Jn 1:5–7)

Conclusion and Applications