

Briefing Document-1 John Lesson 40

November 5, 2025

Executive Summary

This document synthesizes the core teachings from a lesson on 1 John, Chapter 2, focusing on the theme of "Christians and Antichrist." The analysis reveals that the concept of "antichrist" is multifaceted, representing not only a specific, future eschatological figure but also a pervasive spirit of opposition to Jesus Christ that has been active since His first coming. The presence of these "many antichrists" is presented as the definitive sign that humanity is living in the "last hour"—a period spanning from Christ's arrival to the present day. The teaching outlines doctrinal and moral tests for distinguishing authentic believers from those who possess the spirit of antichrist, emphasizing the centrality of a correct understanding of Christ's nature and work for salvation.

Introduction: The Context of the Teaching

The analysis is derived from Lesson 40 in a series on the first epistle of John, specifically addressing the concepts introduced in 1 John 2:18-23. The central purpose of this section of the epistle, as presented, is to draw a sharp distinction between true Christians and those who embody the spirit of "antichrist." John's teachings are framed as a series of tests—doctrinal and moral—designed to help believers ascertain the authenticity of their faith and identify falsehood.

Defining "Antichrist"

The term "antichrist" is unique to the writings of the Apostle John and carries a dual meaning that is critical to understanding its application.

Etymology and Dual Meaning

The prefix "anti" can be interpreted in two primary ways, both of which apply to the concept of antichrist:

- **Against Christ:** This refers to an overt and open opposition to Jesus Christ, His teachings, and His followers.
- **In the Place of Christ:** This describes a more subtle and deceptive opposition, where an individual or system seeks to replace or impersonate Christ. This is also referred to as a "pseudo Christ."²

An antichrist can embody one or both of these characteristics, often opposing Christ while simultaneously presenting a false alternative. Historical figures cited as examples include

James Jones of Jonestown and Charles Manson, who both claimed a Christ-like status for themselves.

The Spirit of Antichrist: An Attitude of Opposition

Beyond a specific individual, "antichrist" is characterized as an attitude or a spirit that is hostile to the true nature and work of Christ.

- **Core Belief:** The defining feature of this spirit is the denial that Jesus is the Christ. This includes any denial of His divine nature, His humanity, His identity, or the efficacy of His work.

- **Biblical Basis:** John's writings affirm this definition:

- 1 John 2:22 states, *"Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son."*

- 1 John 4:3 elaborates that "every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist."

- **Broad Application:** This spirit is not limited to false prophets or overt deceivers. It is considered to be present in anyone who rejects Christ, particularly those who have been exposed to the gospel and consciously take a position against Him. The teaching identifies this spirit within various groups, including cults, Muslims, Jews who reject Jesus as Messiah, and anyone who holds an aberrant view of Christ.

The "Last Hour": Its Nature and Signs

The teaching asserts that the current era is biblically defined as the "last hour," a concept directly tied to the appearance of Christ and the subsequent rise of antichrists.

The Proliferation of Antichrists as a Key Indicator

According to 1 John 2:18, the evidence that it is the "last hour" is the fact that "even now many antichrists have come." The emergence of opposition to Christ and false claimants to messiahship is the definitive sign that the final chapter of human history has begun. One cannot exist without the other; the arrival of Christ immediately instigated the arrival of antichrist opposition.

The Biblical Definition of the "Last Hour"

The "last hour" is not a literal 60-minute period but refers to the entire epoch that began with the first coming of Jesus Christ.

- **The Two Ages:** The New Testament delineates two ages: the "present evil age" dominated by Satan's influence, and the "age to come," a future kingdom of righteousness under Christ's rule (the Millennial Kingdom).

- **Inauguration of the End:** The "last hour" is synonymous with this "present evil age." It was inaugurated by Christ's arrival, an event the Bible calls the "fullness of the time" (Galatians 4:4) and the "end of the ages" (1 Corinthians 10:11, Hebrews 9:26). Scripture confirms this timing:

- Hebrews 1:2 states that God *"has in these last days spoken to us by His Son."*

- 1 Peter 1:20 notes Christ *"was manifest in these last times for you."*

Contemporary Signs and Divine Judgment

The speaker identifies several contemporary phenomena as evidence of the "last hour" and expressions of God's judgment on a rebellious world.

- The election of a leader viewed as an anti-semitic in New York City is interpreted as an act of divine intervention and judgment.

- The societal distress is described as "real," with people facing broken cars, homelessness, and a cutoff of government assistance.

- The increasing speed of societal change, widespread deception by mainstream media, and a growing hostility toward Christians are presented as further signs of the times.

The Final Antichrist: The Future Culmination

While many antichrists exist, the Bible also speaks of a single, final figure who will be the ultimate embodiment of this spirit.

- **Distinction:** It is crucial to distinguish between the "many antichrists" (plural, lower-case 'a') who have been present throughout church history and "the Antichrist" (singular, upper-case 'A') who is yet to come.

- **Role in End Times:** This final Antichrist is described as a man possessed by Satan who will appear on the world stage and initiate the seven-year period known as the Tribulation. His arrival will mark the beginning of the end of "man's day," a time when both Satan's power and God's judgment are unleashed upon the world.

Doctrinal and Moral Tests for Christian Authenticity

The epistle of John provides several tests to help believers distinguish between genuine faith and the spirit of antichrist. These tests fall into two main categories.

Doctrinal Tests

A true Christian is identified by their adherence to correct doctrine, particularly concerning sin and the identity of Christ.

- **View of Sin (Anthropological Test):** A genuine believer acknowledges their own sinfulness and depravity. In contrast, a characteristic of false teaching (like that of the Gnostics) was the denial of personal sin.
- **View of Christ (Christological Test):** A true believer holds a correct view of Jesus Christ as the God-man, Savior, and Redeemer. A wrong view of Christ is described as the "fastest way to damnation."

Moral Tests

In addition to right belief, a true Christian's life is marked by right behavior and affections.

- **Love:** A believer is characterized by love for Christ and for other people.
- **Obedience:** This love is demonstrated through obedience to the Word of God.
- **Worldliness:** True Christians do not love the world or the things in the world, contrasting with the family of God.

Greek Terminology and Definitions

The following table provides definitions for Greek terms referenced in the source material.

Term	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
<i>Paidía</i> (παιδιά)	pahee-DEE-ah	Literally "little children." Used as a term of endearment or to address spiritual children who are new in their faith.
<i>Pseudo</i> (ψευδής)	SOO-doh	A prefix meaning false, counterfeit, or deceptive. Used in the context of "pseudo Christ" to denote a false messiah.