

Study Guide-1 John, Lesson 40
November 5, 2025

This study guide provides a comprehensive review of the core concepts presented in the lesson on 1 John chapter 2, focusing on the distinction between true Christians and the spirit of the Antichrist.

Key Concepts and Themes

This lesson, centered on 1 John 2:18-23, explores the nature of the Antichrist, the meaning of "the last hour," and the tests by which believers can be distinguished from non-believers. The Apostle John, a master of contrast, sets the truth concerning Christ against the error of those who deny Him.

The Nature of "Antichrist"

The term "Antichrist" is unique to the writings of the Apostle John, appearing three times in 1 John and once in 2 John. The prefix "anti-" holds a dual meaning, which defines the nature of this opposition:

- **Against Christ:** This refers to an open, overt opposition to Jesus Christ. It is a clear and plain antagonism.
- **In the Place of Christ:** This describes a more subtle and disguised opposition, where an individual or system seeks to replace Christ or falsely represent themselves as Christ.

An antichrist can embody both meanings simultaneously, being both against Christ and seeking to be in the place of Christ. Examples from history cited include James Jones and Charles Manson, who both presented themselves as Christ figures.

The Antichrist and "many antichrists"

The lesson draws a crucial distinction between the singular, definitive Antichrist and the plural antichrists that have appeared throughout history.

- **The Antichrist (singular):** This refers to one specific, powerful man who will appear in the future. He is not Satan himself but a man possessed by Satan who will initiate the seven-year period known as the Tribulation. He is the final and culminating figure in a long line of antichrists.
- **antichrists (plural):** As stated in 1 John 2:18, "even now many antichrists have come." This refers to any individual throughout history who possesses the "spirit of antichrist." This spirit is an attitude of opposition to Christ. Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ, attacks His deity or humanity, or rejects Him is described as having the spirit of antichrist.

The "Last Hour"

John states twice in 1 John 2:18 that "it is the last hour." This term does not refer to a literal 60-minute period but to the current era of human history.

- **Beginning:** This age began with the arrival of Jesus Christ, His first advent. As noted in Galatians 4:4, "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son."
- **Nature:** Paul characterizes this period in Galatians 1:4 as "this present evil age," a time dominated by evil because Satan rules the world.
- **Proof:** The primary evidence that humanity is in "the last hour" is the proliferation of antichrists. Opposition to Christ could not exist before Christ came; therefore, the presence of many antichrists confirms that the final chapter of human history has begun.

Distinguishing Believers from Non-Believers

Throughout his epistle, John provides tests to measure who is a true believer. These can be categorized as doctrinal and moral.

- **Doctrinal Tests:** These focus on core beliefs.
 - **View of Sin:** A true Christian has a correct evaluation of their own sinfulness, recognizing man as sinful and depraved (an anthropological test).
 - **View of Christ:** A true believer has a correct view of who Jesus Christ is—the God-man, the Savior, and the Redeemer (a Christological test). A wrong view of Christ is described as the fastest way to damnation.
- **Moral Tests:** These focus on a believer's conduct and affections.
 - **Love:** True Christians are marked by love for Christ and love for others.
 - **Obedience:** They are characterized by obedience to the Word of God.
 - **Worldliness:** They do not love the world.

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the information provided in the lesson.

1. What are the two distinct meanings of the prefix "anti" as it relates to the term Antichrist?
2. According to the lesson, what is the primary difference between "the Antichrist" (singular) and "many antichrists" (plural)?
3. How does 1 John 2:18 use the presence of many antichrists as evidence for a specific time period?
4. Describe the "spirit of antichrist" as an attitude. Who is said to possess this spirit?
5. What are the two key doctrinal tests John provides to help distinguish a true believer?
6. Beyond correct doctrine, what two moral characteristics mark a true Christian's life?
7. According to the speaker, when did "the last hour" begin, and what does this period represent?
8. How is a wrong view of Christ described in terms of its spiritual consequences?
9. In addition to open opposition, what is a more subtle way an antichrist may operate?
10. Why is the term "Antichrist" considered unique within the New Testament?

Answer Key

1. The prefix "anti" can mean either **"against"** Christ, which signifies open and clear opposition, or **"in the place of"** Christ, which refers to someone who more subtly seeks to replace or impersonate Him.
2. "The Antichrist" is a single, final, and powerful man possessed by Satan who will appear in the future to initiate the Tribulation. "Many antichrists" refers to numerous individuals throughout history who have the spirit of opposition to Christ and deny His true nature.
3. The verse states that because many antichrists have already come, "we know that it is the last hour." The proliferation of opposition to Christ is presented as the key sign that this final era of human history has begun.
4. The "spirit of antichrist" is an attitude of opposition to Jesus Christ. This spirit is possessed by anyone who rejects Christ, denies His deity or humanity, or stands against Him, particularly after having heard the truth of the gospel.
5. The two doctrinal tests are a believer's evaluation of their own sinfulness (recognizing human depravity) and their belief about who Jesus Christ is, affirming His full deity and humanity (a Christological test).
6. The two primary moral characteristics of a true Christian are love for Christ and for others, and obedience to the Word of God. They are also marked by a lack of love for the world.
7. "The last hour" began with the arrival or ascension of Jesus Christ approximately 2,000 years ago. This period represents the "present evil age" that constitutes the final chapter of human history before Christ's return.
8. A wrong view of Christ, such as those held by cults, is described as the "fastest way to damnation." A correct understanding of who Jesus Christ is is fundamental to salvation.
9. A more subtle way an antichrist may operate is by impersonating Christ or seeking to put himself in the place of Christ. This is in contrast to open, overt opposition and is described as being more clandestine and disguised.
10. The term is unique because the Apostle John is the only writer in the Bible to use the specific word "Antichrist." It appears in his epistles (1 John and 2 John) but nowhere else in the Old or New Testaments, though the concept is widely dealt with under other names.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the distinction between the singular, future Antichrist and the plural, present antichrists. How does this distinction inform the understanding of "the last hour" as presented in the lesson?
2. The lesson describes the "spirit of antichrist" as an "attitude." Using examples from the source text, explain what this means and discuss its manifestations in both overt and covert forms.
3. The Apostle John is described as a "master of contrast." Elaborate on this teaching style by explaining the contrasts he draws between Christians and non-Christians regarding their view of Christ, love, and the world.
4. Discuss the relationship between Christ's arrival and the rise of antichrists. According to the lesson, how does the very existence of strong opposition to Jesus serve as a proof of His identity as the Messiah?
5. Explain the doctrinal and moral tests for identifying a true believer as outlined in the lesson. How do these tests directly combat the Gnostic ideas that John was writing against?

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Antichrist (the)	The final, culminating, and powerful individual, a man possessed by Satan, who will appear in the future and initiate the seven-year Tribulation.
antichrists (many)	A term for any person throughout history who possesses the spirit of opposition to Christ, denies His nature, or falsely claims to be Him.
Christological Test	A doctrinal test to determine if someone is a true believer based on their understanding and belief in who Jesus Christ is—His deity and humanity.
Elect	A term for saved people, also referred to as the "chosen ones."
Gnostics	The "learned people" or "really smart people" against whom John was predominantly writing. They held a perverted view of Christ and would claim that they did not sin.
Last Hour	The current period of human history, also called the "present evil age," which began with the arrival or ascension of Christ and will continue until His return.
Millennial Kingdom	The future 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth that will inaugurate "the age to come," a time when righteousness will prevail.

Pseudo Christ	A false Christ; someone who impersonates Christ. "Pseudo" is used interchangeably with "false."
Spirit of Antichrist	An attitude of opposition toward Jesus Christ. It is a spirit amongst humanity that manifests in anyone who denies Christ's nature, identity, or work.
Tribulation	A future seven-year time period of immense judgment from God and unleashed power from Satan, initiated by the arrival of the Antichrist. It is divided into two 3.5-year sections, the second being the "Great Tribulation."

Greek Terminology

- **Paidion**¹ (pie-DEE-on): A Greek term for "little children." In the context of 1 John 2:18, it refers to believers who are spiritual children; they know the Father but have not yet fully grown up in the Lord.

¹As referenced in the lesson on 1 John 2:18.