

## The End Time in Our Time # 6

1 John 2: 18-23

In our previous study John gave direction concerning spiritual victory for the believer. Regardless of our maturity level, all need to grow in the Lord. Continued growth is essential in overcoming the difficulties we face. John knew the struggles present and he sought to inform us of specific pitfalls that are common to all: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. We found that all sin ultimately falls into one of these three categories.

Our text this evening continues to deal with particular difficulties common to all believers in every generation. John reveals the presence and dangers associated with the spirit of antichrist. They were only a few decades removed from the ascension of Christ and the spirit of antichrist was already prevalent among them. Now we stand some 2,000 years removed and the spirit of opposition to Christ and His church grows stronger.

As we look at the verses before us, I want to examine the [distinctions](#) John shares concerning our day as we consider: [The End Time in Our Time](#). We discover it is:

**I. A Definitive Time** (18) – [Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time](#). Such a time as this can be clearly defined. Notice:

**A. The Proclamation** (18a) – [Little children, it is the last time](#): It is evident John is writing to the church, the children of God. He declares that they were living in the last time. How could that be? Was John mistaken? If they were living in the last time 2,000 years ago, then why are we still here? Why hasn't Jesus already returned? We must understand the realm in which John speaks. He is not speaking of the specific time when the Lord returns, but the span of time between His ascension and His second coming. John lived in the last time and we remain in that time.

**B. The Degradation** (18b) – [Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists](#); John confirms what they had been taught. In the last time, the spirit of antichrist would be prevalent upon the earth. We know just prior to our Lord's return, Antichrist will establish world-wide rule and domination. He will come and deceive many. We don't know exactly when that will occur, but clearly it hasn't happened yet. However the spirit of antichrist, standing in opposition to all that is godly and righteous, is present today.

- Believers in John's day faced opposition and that opposition is growing stronger with each passing day. We live in an age when the majority of society resists the Christian agenda. Other religions are being promoted in America while Christians are being restricted from practicing their faith publicly. Our world continues to embrace the spirit of antichrist.

**C. The Confirmation** (18c) – *whereby we know that it is the last time*. John reveals the presence of this spirit of antichrist confirms the existence of the last time. No man knows when the Lord will return, but we can know and understand that we are definitely living in the last time. *2 Tim.3:1 – This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 Tim.4:3-4 – For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; <sup>[4]</sup> And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

**II. A Disruptive Time** (19) – *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.* Here we see the disruption these cause among the church. Consider:

**A. Their Deception** (19a) – *They went out from us, but they were not of us;* John experienced those who had been perceived as part of the church, departing because they were not genuinely born again. Some may have stayed for years, others just a short while, but eventually they left.

- We have all experienced this in our Christian journey. I know many who made professions of faith and attended church regularly. By all outward appearances they were saved, but they have since left the church and have no desire for the things of God any more. I am convinced our churches are filled with professors who lack a genuine possession. How else do you explain the turmoil and division many churches face?

**B. Their Dissension** (19b) – *for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us:* A tree is known by the fruit it bears. Those who are in Christ may falter and wander from the Lord at times, but they will eventually return. God will chastise His children. *If they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us.* It doesn't get any simpler than that!

- *A seventeen-year-old high school student, in order to graduate, had to write an essay on a religious subject. He chose the subject of the union of believers with Christ, according to the Gospel of John. Let me share with you just a portion of that essay: "Our heart, reason, history, and the work of Christ convince us that without Him we are doomed by God, and only Christ can save us." These thoughts from a seventeen-year-old reveal one with spiritual wisdom beyond his age.*

*They are words from one that had been baptized at age six into the Lutheran Church, and confirmed at age 16. The name of this young man: Karl Marx. Just nine years after writing those words, he abandoned any Christian commitment he may have had at one time. He would go on to become one of the most influential atheists of history. His ideas would spawn through the Soviet Union and the Communist movement, one of the greatest epics of human misery and death in history.* <sup>1</sup> 1 Tim.4:1 – Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

**C. Their Desire (19c)** – *but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.* These are not content to depart quietly. They possess hatred and animosity for the church. They want the world to know they have left the church and are no longer part of it. (Keep in mind, John is speaking of those who made a profession of faith, but there was no genuine conversion.)

- You have likely met folks like this. I worked with one several years ago. He was the vilest man I have ever met. His mouth continually spewed cursing and obscenity. He boasted that he was once a deacon in a Baptist church, but had recanted his faith. He wanted everyone to know of his disdain for the church and the Lord. These not only resist the church, but seek to publicly bring shame and reproach.

**III. A Discriminate Time (20-21)** – Although we are living in the last time, we do not have to be ignorant of such a time. We can be prepared to deal with such adversity. Consider:

**A. Our Aide (20)** – *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* The last time is marked by the spirit of antichrist, but the believer is not alone. We face increased opposition and growing skepticism from the world, but we have a source of strength and wisdom beyond this world. We have an **unction** from the Lord, the indwelling of the Spirit. We do not have to wander aimlessly through life, discouraged and defeated by the enemy. In times of uncertainty, we can rely on the Spirit to guide us!

**B. Our Approach (21)** – *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.* Consider John's words in the context of this passage. We live in a world dominated and influenced by the spirit of antichrist. Society grows darker each day. We are in a moral tailspin with no correction in sight. These are difficult, and even troubling times, but we have an advantage. We have received the Word of God and the truth it brings. We have a personal relationship with Christ. As the world grows darker, we continue to walk in the Light!

- The key John seeks to convey is our obligation to measure life and the circumstances we face by Scripture. Man's philosophies and ideas may be gaining prominence, but they do not trump the Word. The spirit of antichrist may be prevalent, but we do not have to succumb to the devil's tactics. Approach life according to the Word!

**IV. A Defiant Time** (22-23) – Here we find yet another reminder of the difficulty of our day. We are living in a day when many are defiant and rebellious toward the Lord. Notice:

**A. The Denial** (22a) – *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?* No doubt John had encountered many who denied that Jesus was the Christ. Many had heard of Him, some even knew Him as He walked upon this earth, but they refused to embrace Jesus for who He was. The greatest truth ever revealed is given in Christ, and yet many deny that truth.

- To deny truth is to embrace a lie. Satan seeks to deceive and he has succeeded with many. Our world is filled with those who deny Christ. They never give any thought to His love and sacrificial atonement. They refuse to believe He is the only way of salvation. Denial of Christ leads to depravity, and it bears eternal consequences.

**B. The Defiance** (22b) – *He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.* John does not shy away from truth here. He adamantly declares those who deny Christ are antichrist. He reveals another fundamental truth. You cannot deny Christ without also denying the Father. Many assume they are okay as long as they acknowledge God. It is impossible to please God or be accepted of Him apart from Christ. He is the source of our reconciliation to God. Apart from Christ all remain in sin, condemned and separated from God.

**C. The Danger** (23) – *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.* There can be no relationship with God without a relationship with Christ. All who deny Christ and refuse to embrace His finished work of redemption have no part with the Father.

- This conveys the dangerous lifestyle many choose. They live in rebellion and denial of the only One who can cleanse their sin and provide acceptance to God. Believing there is a God in heaven is never enough. It is good to acknowledge God, but we must also embrace the Son. We must come to Him by faith, realizing we cannot obtain righteousness in ourselves, and receive the gift of grace Jesus gives in salvation. That is the only hope humanity has!

**Conclusion:** I think it is evident to see we are living in the last time. Our Lord could come at any moment. We live in a world filled with the spirit of antichrist. These are difficult days and they will wax worse and worse. However, we do not have to walk alone. The believer is assured of the guidance of the Spirit as we deal with the assault of the enemy. We have received truth in Christ and find it in His Word. We can live victorious in a time such as this.

John spoke boldly in this passage, but he spoke truth. To deny Christ is to deny the Father, and such denial embraces the spirit of antichrist. I pray you know Christ as your Savior. I pray you have embraced Him for all He truly is. If not, seek Him as He speaks to you. Denying Christ is a dangerous decision with eternal consequences.

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