

AS EXPECTED, THE LYING ANTICHRISTS HAVE COME

1Jno.2:18-21,27

Ed Dye

I. INTRODUCTION

1. After warning believers against the danger of loving the world and the things of the world, and giving assurance of victory over it for the one who does the will of God, John goes on to warn them against those of the Gnostic persuasion, or more specifically of the antichrists, who had been of them but had gone out from them.
2. He knows the dangers these false teachers represent are great and could possibly seduce others and lead them astray; thus, sounding the warning is in order, and is plainly stated with its dire consequences suggested.
3. Jesus had repeatedly warned his disciples concerning coming days of struggle and terrible suffering, and against false Christs and false prophets that would come, showing signs and wonders and leading astray, if possible, the very elect, Mt.24:24; Mk.13:5,6,22,23; see also Mt.7:15-20.
4. The apostle Paul writes of the danger to the churches both from without and within, Ac.20:28-31.
5. He also warns about a “falling away” that must come and “that man of sin” that must be revealed before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ could take place, who would oppose and exalt himself against all that is called God, 2Th.2:1-4.
6. There are other places, especially in Revelation, where false teachers and prophets, beasts and sin and unrighteousness, are spoken of; but in 1Jno.2:18 beginning, John speaks of the appearance of the “antichrists” as an indication that it is “the last time.”
7. The antichrists and their particular brand of false doctrine, as well as their resultant evil life-style, is the very purpose for his writing this Epistle.
8. The word “antichrists” in the N.T. is peculiar to John; he uses it in 1Jno. 2:18,22; 4:3; 2Jno.7. Although both Peter and Jude speak of those who deny the Lord who bought them, 2Pet.2:1; Jude 4.
9. Believers had been prepared to expect the rise of antichrists in the last time.
10. In 1Jno.2:18-21 five specific things are taught about the antichrists and the faithful disciples. Those five things are as follows:

II. DISCUSSION

A. IN V.18 THE DISCIPLES ARE REMINDED THAT THEY HAD BEEN TAUGHT TO EXPECT THE COMING OF ANTICHRISTS: “And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come”

1. Previous warning had been given concerning the coming of antichrists.
2. And it could not have been otherwise, the world being what it is – being so much under the influence of the Wicked One, and full of those things of the world which are not of the Father, previously mentioned in vv.13-16.
3. In fact, was ever anything provided for the good of humanity, or proclaimed to humanity, which was not opposed and perverted by the Evil One, Satan, himself, and his ministers?
4. So it was to be with the coming of the Messiah, the Incarnation of Christ, and his Divine Mission on behalf of man.

B. AS THEY HAD EXPECTED, EVEN NOW MANY ANTICHRISTS HAVE COME: “even now are there many antichrists,” v.18.

1. As you were taught to expect that antichrist would come, even now many antichrists are here.
2. If the singular term “antichrist” is employed, it is only as a collective or representative term.
 - a. The Scriptures know nothing about what many of our day call “The Antichrist” who is to appear just before the 2nd coming of Christ.
 - b. To find some single person answering to antichrist has been a kind of mania among professed believers speculating about the end time.
 - c. There never was only one; there was not then; there is not now; and there never will be “The Antichrist.”
 - d. It is inaccurate and unscriptural to fix the term “antichrist” solely on one individual. And John does all he can to guard against that serious mistake when he says, “even now are there many antichrists” (plural), suggesting as the conclusion of his sentence, “and how many more there will be by-and-by.”
 - e. In fact, even today there are many; such as: the Modernist; the unbelieving Jews; et al.

C. FURTHERMORE, THE COMING OF THE ANTICHRISTS IDENTIFIED THAT PERIOD OR THAT AGE AS “THE LAST TIME,” V.18,a,d.

1. The words “it is the last time” (KJV) are to be closely construed with vv.15-17 immediately preceding them.
 - a. Those verses describe the transient nature of the worldly sphere and all that is in it.
 - b. And therein point out that only those who love the Father rather than the world and the things of the world, and who do the will of the Father, shall abide forever or unto the ages.
2. Beginning here in v.18, he continues his exhortation by solemnly directing the disciples attention to the fact that they were even then in the period of “the last time,” and that events known to them to indicate the fact of it had appeared; that is, the coming of the antichrists.
 - a. But what is meant by the expression “the last time”?
3. By “the last time” (KJV) or “the last hour” (ASV) is not meant:
 - a. The termination of the Jewish state, as some think.
 - (1) For the Jewish state had already ended some 20 years prior to the time 1Jno. was written, and thus could not have been the “time” or the “hour” to which John referred.
 - (2) This view is historically inaccurate.
 - b. The last hour of the world before the consummation of all things, or the end of this world at the 2nd Coming of Christ, as others teach.
 - (1) To ascribe to John this position is to:
 - (a) Have him teaching something which the passing of the centuries – some 2,000 years – has proven to be untrue.
 - (b) Ascribe to him a position which both impeaches his inspiration and the inerrancy of the Scriptures.
 - (c) Cf. Deut.18:20-22; 2Pet.1:20,21.
 - c. Therefore, both of these ideas are contrary to the Scriptures. We reject both of them as false.
4. The word rendered “time” (KJV) “hour” (ASV) is from the original “HORA”, meaning “time with reference to a fixed date or period,” but not used to refer to the end of this world, or the end of time at the 2nd Coming of Christ.
 - a. Definition of and comments on the term “HORA” in 1Jno.2:18.
 - (1) W.E.Vine, II,235: “primarily denoted any time or period, especially a season. In the N.T. it is used to denote (a) a part of a day, especially a twelfth part of a day or night, an hour, e.g., Mt.8:13; Ac.10:3,9; 23:23...(b) a period more or less extended, e.g., 1Jno.2:18.

- (2) Though the word “hour” from HORA is found many times in the N.T., the phrase containing the term “hour” or “time” translated “last time” or “last hour” is not. This phrase is found in the N.T. only twice, both of which are in 1Jno.2:18.
- (3) Vincent, Word Studies In The N.T., Vol.II,337: “The phrase only here in the N.T....the phrase here does not refer to the end of the world.”
- (4) R.C.H. Lenski, Commentary on 1Jno.2:18: “ ‘last hour’ should not be referred to the short period that immediately precedes the Parousia, and on the basis of this the charge be raised that John (Paul, too) was mistaken. Then these apostles were false apostles! (Cf. 1Cor.14:14,15, ejd). None of the apoltles knew the day or the hour of the Parousia (Mt.24:36; see Mk.13:32,ejd), or even pretended to know this...John is not determining the destruction of the ‘final hour,’ he is pointing his readers to the sign which indicates its beginning, the appearance of many antichrists: ‘whence we know...that it is...final hour’” (or “the last time”, KJV, ejd).
- (5) E.M. Zerr, Bible Commentary, 1954 edition, Vol.6: “The verse speaks of antichrists Christ) so we understand John means we are living in the last Dispensation. Such is a logical conclusion because of the basis of the whole system is belief in Christ (not Moses).”
- (6) Guy N. Woods, Commentary: “The word is of obvious figurative significance, and thus describes a determinate period fixed in the divine mind and the last of the events thus predetermined by the Father. The word designates time, time conceived of as a definite period, this period being the last in the succession of periods similarly determined by deity. It therefore designates the Christian dispensation, the last of the great periods or ages arranged by the Father.”
- (7) Without a doubt in my mind, this is what “the last time” or “the last hour” means, or what other passages in the O.T. and N.T. call the “the last days.” Cf. Isa.2:2-4; Mic.4:1,2; Ac.2:17; 2Tim.3:1; Heb.1:2; 1Pet.1:20; 2Pet.3:3; Jude 18.

D. THE ANTICHRISTS PROVED TO BE MISCHIEVOUS, TROUBLESOME PERSONS INSIDE THE CHURCH, THE SPIRITUAL FAMILY OF GOD, BUT WHO “WENT OUT FROM US,” V.19.

1. Thus v.19 reveals the spiritual place and position of the antichrists both before and after.
2. The full significance of v.19 as an account of the spiritual condition of the antichrists which John is exposing has been overlooked by many and denied by many others.
 - a. That is, that they were at first believers inside the churches, not outside.
 - b. Then they went out from the faith; they became apostates from the faith, and were now making themselves as actively troublesome against the faith as they possibly could.
 - c. They first espoused the Cause of Christ. Then they defected, deserted, apostatized, fell-away from it.\
3. “They went out from us” tells what happened to these antichrists.
 - a. The preposition “our from” indicates origin from the center; they were, therefore, formerly among the disciples, and members of the church.
 - b. “They went out from us” says they defected from the faith; they deserted, apostatized, fell-away.
4. “They were not of us” tells why “they went out from us”
 - a. That is, they did not possess or retain the same spirit of obedience characteristic of the faithful disciples.
 - b. If they had “they would have continued with us”
 - c. In defecting or apostatizing from the faith, they were made manifest (shown to be), not of the faithful, and for reason cited here.
5. The impossibility of apostasy, or “once saved, always saved”, advocates erroneously argue from v.19 that this proves those antichrists were never saved, that they were insincere professors or pretenders from the beginning. This is not so, because:
 - a. They were once with the disciples and continued with them for a time.
 - b. They went out from the disciples.
 - c. One does not go out from a place or relationship where one has never been.

- d. Had they continued to possess the same belief in, love for, and equal desire to serve the Lord, as those from whom they went out, they would have continued with us.
 - e. They did, in fact, continue for a time, and then ceased to be faithful.
6. We learn from this:
- a. That they simply apostatized from the right way, as so many other passages teach can, has and may happen.
 - b. There was no necessity from within or without that made it impossible for these people to forsake the right way.
 - c. That they were under no compulsion to remain in a saved state such as would have been true if the doctrine of decrees and predestination as taught by Calvinists were true.

E. VV.20,21,27 REVEAL AND EMPHASIZE THE MIRACULOUS SPIRITUAL GIFT THE DISCIPLES POSSESSED AT THAT TIME ENABLING THEM TO DISCERN THE LIE OF THE ANTICHRISTS.

1. What believers have and from whom: “But ye have an unction (an “anointing”) from the Holy One,” Vv.20a,27.
 - a. “Unction” (KJV) “anointing” (RV) is from CHRISMA.
 - (1) The term originally signified an oil or an ointment rubbed on the skin, and later, the anointing itself.
 - (2) The reference here harks back to a practice under the Law of Moses of anointing with perfumed oils those elevated to positions of trusts or power, in compliance with the will of Jehovah.
 - b. Thayer, 672 – CHRISMA – “Anointing was the inaugural ceremony for priests (Exo.28:37; 29:7; 30:25; 40:13-15; Lev.6:22; Num.35:25); kings (1Sam.9:16; 10:10; 15:1; 16:3,13), and sometimes also prophets (Isa.61:1). And by it they were regarded as endued with the (power of, ejd) the Holy Spirit and divine gifts (1Sam.16:13; Isa.61:1). Hence in 1Jno.2:20...and 27...is used of ‘the gift of the Holy Spirit,’ as the efficient aid in getting a knowledge of the truth.”
 - c. Vine, I,59: “It is used only metaphorically in the N.T.; by metonymy, of the Holy Spirit, 1Jno.2:20,27. The believers who had this were ‘anointed ones’...In Dan.9:26 CHRISMA stands for the Anointed One, ‘Christ,’ the noun standing by metonymy for the Person Himself, as for the Holy Spirit in 1Jno.2.”

- d. This refers to “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” or “Spiritual gifts” of a miraculous nature, not to some so-called “ordinary measure” of the Holy Spirit, as some think.
 - (1) This is evident because of what the anointing enabled the receiver of the gift to know and to do.
- 2. Who is the Holy One who anointed them? V.20a.
 - a. None other than Jesus Christ himself. For he:
 - (1) Is “the Holy One and the Just,” Ac.3:14; Jno.6:69 (RV); Rev.3:7; 1Pet.3:18.
 - (2) It is who promised spiritual gifts to baptized believers, Mk. 16:17,18.
 - (3) It was who sent forth the power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, Ac.2:32,33.
- 3. What this anointing from the Holy One enabled its possessor to know and to do with reference to the problem of the antichrists, Vv.20c,21,27; 1Jno.4:1-3.
 - a. As a result of the anointing, it is said of its possessor:
 - (1) “And ye know all things,” v.20c,27; i.e., the all things of the context; the false teaching of the false teachers of the antichrist seeking to deceive them and lead them astray, further identified in v.22; 4:1-3; 2Jno.7.
 - (a) They know all things needed for the proper action in this matter concerning the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ that is under consideration.
 - (2) “Because ye know it (“the truth”), and that no lie is of the truth,” v.21.
 - (a) They were able to discern between the lie of the lying antichrists and the truth of the gospel, the doctrine of Christ. Cf. 1Jon.4:1; 2Jno.9-11.
 - (b) The truth springs from God “who cannot lie” (Tit. 1:2; Heb.6:18), and that truth came to them through the Son of God, by the agency of the Spirit-filled, Spirit-guided apostles, which John affirms was declared to them in 1Jno.1:1-5; Cf. Jno.14; 15; 16; Gal.1:11,12; Eph.3:1-5, et al.
 - (c) Lying springs from the Devil, who is the father of it (Jno.8:44), and through his ministers such as these antichrists, who are identified with lying and deception from 1Jno.1:6 through 2Jno.7. Cf. 2Cor.11:13-15.

- (3) “And ye need not that any man teach you...the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie,” v.27. Here two things must be understood:
 - (a) He has reference to the matters of the context as in vv.18-23, those matters only, and their ability to discern between false and true teaching on those matters.
 - (b) The ones who had no need of teaching were those disciples among them who had been anointed (who had an unction from the Holy One), i.e., had received the spiritual gift of discerning of spirits (1Cor.12:10). See 1Jno.4:1.
 - b. There is no mutual ground between truth and error.
 - (1) Truth is truth, and error is error.
 - (2) Their source and their practice and practitioners are entirely removed one from another. Cf. 2Cor.6:14-7:1; Eph.5:11; 1Jno.1:5-8.
 - (3) Lies, one and all, are alien to the truth.
 - c. But when John here says they know “that no lie is of the truth,” he is referring to one fundamental lie, that of the antichrists, which he will specifically identify in verses to follow.
4. How does the N.T. further identify this gift from the Lord? As miraculous signs or spiritual gifts promised by Jesus Christ to baptized believers, Mk.16:16-18; 1Cor.12:1,4-11.
5. When and how were these gifts imparted to baptized believers? Ac.2:14-18; 2:38,39; 9:14-18; 19:5,6; Gal.3:5; 2Tim.1:6.
 - a. There were two exceptions:
 - (1) The apostles of Jesus Christ, who received the power directly from heaven through no medium, as promised, Lk.24:49; Ac.1:1-8; Ac.2:1-4.
 - (2) Cornelius and his house, who received it directly from heaven through no medium, as proof to all, especially the Jews, that God accepted the Gentiles as heirs of salvation as well as the Jews, and on the same basis, Ac.10:44-47; 11:15-18; 15:6-11.
 - b. All others received the gift of the Holy Spirit through the medium of the laying on of the apostles’ hands as per the passages previously cited.
6. But not all disciples received spiritual gifts, nor did those who received spiritual gifts receive all of them, 1Cor.12:28-30; 14:5,13,27,28

- a. Thus those who exercised this power were those who possessed the gift, not the entire body of believers.
- b. And they exercised them in harmony with and for the purpose received.
- c. In the case of our text, it was to expose the lying antichrists!
- 7. What was the duration of the spiritual gifts? Or, how long did such spiritual gifts exist and function? 1Cor.13:8-10.
- 8. To what specific spiritual gift does John refer in 1Jno.2:20,27?
 - a. Because of what it enabled the possessor to do: to try these spirits and to discern their false teaching (1Jno.4:1-3), we know it was the gift known as the “discerning of spirits,” (1Cor.12:10), which was one of the nine enumerated in 1Cor.12:4-11.

III. CONCLUSION

- 1. In our text John characterizes by name and/or doctrine those he had previously marked as liars in word and deed in 1Jno.1:6,8,10.
 - a. Here, by name, he identifies them with their false doctrine.
 - b. They are antichrists who are identified, not with the truth of the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ, but with a lie concerning the deity and humanity of Christ.
- 2. In our text John has set those who have an unction (an anointing) from the Holy One, and who know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth, over against the antichrists, who are once again identified with a lie.
- 3. The antichrists are liars.
 - a. They don't just lie; they are liars; they are deceivers.
 - b. They lie:
 - (1) About having fellowship with God while walking in darkness, 1Jno.1:6.
 - (2) About being guilty of sin, 1Jno.1:8.
 - (3) About having committed sin, 1Jno.1:10.
 - (4) About the humanity of Christ, 1Jno.2:22.
 - (5) About the deity of Christ, 2Jno.7; 1Jno.5:10.
 - c. Thus they are liars; they are not simply someone who has told a lie; they are liars in the sense of “a person who lies, esp. habitually.” – Webster.

