

THE BOOK OF FIRST JOHN

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The Congregational Anointing – 1 John 2:18-27

PURPOSE: To know how to make the church sustainable for future generations with *orthodox* agape love.

Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, **so now many antichrists have come**. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. ²⁰ **But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.** ²¹ I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. ²² Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴ Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

²⁶ I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷ But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. **But as his anointing teaches you about everything**, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

- 1 John 2:18-27

I. Three Types of Antichrists (2:18-25)

In the New Testament Greek, the common prefix “anti-” can mean something or someone who is “against-[the root word next to it]” or “in the place of-”. John’s Epistles are the only biblical

book entries which use the term “antichrist” (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 7) per se. However, other biblical writers describe, in more detail, the identity of either capital-“A” or little-“a” antichrist(s): Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15-21, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, and Revelation 13.

Every now and then the evangelical church will get hyped up over someone who “fits” the definition of Antichrist. This isn’t entirely a pointless exercise since the above passages do, in fact, keep us on the alert –as part of our Christian perseverance through dark days. On the same note, there is reason for concern when the obsession over Antichrist overshadows our affections for the true and living Christ who conquers in the end.

Looking back at First John, harmonizing it with other biblical passages, we see there is a gradation of “imposter-messiahs.” Some of these on the spectrum can hit closer to home than we think...

A. The Antichrist – The Beast of Revelation (1 John 2:18)

This person is the most concentrated form of evil, deception, and villainy capable of being contained in human form. He comes off as looking like the perfect Messiah (with global praise!), but will turn into a ravenous dictator-tyrant overnight. His time occurs in the eschaton, in the Apocalypse of the book of *Revelation* (which was probably authored by the same writer of *First John*). In this distinct biblical age, his false prophets will be given the power to do false signs –“so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24). It is similar to the time of Moses in Exodus 7, when Pharaoh’s magicians were able to copycat Aaron’s staff turning into a serpent. But just as Aaron’s one transformed staff finally swallowed up those of Pharaoh’s, so too will the sign of the One true Christ, *appearing from the clouds*, topple earthbound Antichrist.

B. The antichrists – apostates mostly in the church era

1. Outsider apostates (e.g., Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Christian Scientists).
2. Homegrown apostates (e.g., more familiar to the history of evangelicalism, it is the ecumenical, emergent, Levitical-monastic, and progressive movements).

The benchmark litmus test of 1 John 2:22-23, “do you deny Jesus is the Messiah?” (if “Yes” then this is NOT a Christian) in tandem with “do you affirm Jesus is your Messiah?” (if “Yes” then this IS a Christian).

Two things to footnote:

- The form of “benchmark litmus test” is not at all foreign to church history. As Christian doctrine has become more solidified over the centuries, so it is that more doctrinal statements may be written in this very lucid, clear format of “Affirmations and Denials” –possibly going for several pages long.
- The above “benchmark litmus test” is not at all exhaustive –but is comprehensive. In other words, it is the first question we would ask of a professing believer but it is not the only question we would ask. Compare it with the benchmark test of Acts 15:28-29 in the *Jerusalem Statement on Gentiles*:

“...For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: ²⁹ that you **abstain** from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well...”

C. The antichrist knocking at the door of our hearts

A Christian is one who puts Jesus on the throne in his or her heart. But our flesh wars against this and tries to replace the Lord with an imposter-messiah (“idol”). See how John ends his letter in 1 John 5:21.

II. **Our Invisible Resource: The Anointing (1 John 2:26-27)**

A. This Anointing is Bible-Based

The words of the Spirit are the words of Scripture, which are also directly and indirectly, Christ’s words (2 Timothy 3:16-17, John 1:1, 14:16-17, 14:26, 15:26, 16:13, 20:22).

B. This Anointing is Church-Wide

As the church comes around the church, *while being empowered by the Holy Spirit*, Truth becomes clearer and the true church borders become better thought out.

The Book of First John Course Outline:

- January 3 - Introduction
- January 10 - Authentic Christian Fellowship / 1 John 1:1-4
- January 17 - The Confession & The Walk / 1 John 1:5-2:2
- January 24 - Triumph of Light over Darkness / 1 John 2:3-11
- January 31 - Rallying the Troops / 1 John 2:12-17
- February 7 - The Congregational Anointing / 1 John 2:18-27
- February 14 - Know Your Roots / 1 John 2:28-3:10
- February 21 - Practical Agape Love / 1 John 3:11-24
- February 28 - Spiritual Discernment / 1 John 4:1-6
- March 7 - Perfected Agape Love / 1 John 4:7-5:4
- March 14 - Orthodox Christology / 1 John 5:5-12
- March 21 - Peace (and War) unto Eternity / 1 John 5:13-21
- March 28 - Conclusion