

Study Guide: “Antichrist”

Carter Sanger, April 2009

Read 1 John 2:18-28 and 4:1-6, then discuss the following.

Introduction

Have you ever talked about someone to other people so much then when that person appears, you feel ashamed? What exactly were you ashamed of? Did you speak the truth? Did it seem like the truth when you first spoke? If it wasn't exactly true, what brought this to light?

Discuss the difference between talking about someone in his/her absence and in his/her presence. Read 1 John 2:28 and comment on this with regard to the absence/presence of Christ.

Our understanding of Christ becomes a “doctrinal test” as to whether or not our faith is real.

I. Antichrist

What comes to mind when you hear the term “antichrist”?

Read 1 John 2:18.

- John speaks of antichrists as evidence. To what is he drawing our attention?
- What is the significance of the “last hour”? Why is happening in the church that John is explaining is a result of being in the last hour? How does this compare to what we see happening in parts of the world today, particularly in the American church?
- John speaks of antichrists (plural) and antichrist (singular). Who are the antichrists according to John's letter? Where did they come from? How were they identified? Have you ever known any antichrists?

II. Test the Spirits

John's reference to antichrist (singular) has its roots in former teaching. Read Matthew 25:15-25 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. Jesus speaks of “the abomination that causes desolation” (a reference to Daniel's prophecy) and Paul speaks of a “man of lawlessness” in 2 Thessalonians 2. John even writes in Revelation 13 of “the beast.” These are more specific to particular persons and events and is often what captivates the interest of many Christians and creates paranoia regarding current public leaders. But they are each given to make specific points to the immediate listeners/readers. For us, reading centuries later, it is the spirit behind these specific “antichrist” figures that we should take note of and remember that it is a spiritual battle that we face.

Read 1 John 4:1-3

- How is it that we listen to the spirits John mentions?
- What is the test of orthodoxy?
- Why is it so important to understand Jesus as he God in the flesh?

III. Trust in Your Anointing

When we read about so many “going out from among us” and that there are powerful and persuasive spiritual forces arrayed against us it should give us pause but not panic.

Read 1 John 2:20, 26-27 and 1 John 4:4-6

- What is our secret weapon against the spirit of the antichrist and his false teaching?
- Salvation in Christ is a spiritual truth and can only truly be embraced by someone spiritually awakened. Compare these verses in John with Paul's writing in 1 Corinthians 2.

Wrap-up

What can you take away from this lesson? Does John write to create panic? (Hint: 1 John 4:4)