

## **1 John 2:18-19 John's warning against false teachers.**

**18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.** Again, we see John address the churches that he is writing to as a loving father or grandfather might, calling them his spiritual Children.

**it is the last hour** John is noting that there has been a change in the church from the true doctrine, the Word of God being taught, to having a bunch of teachers going out and teaching things contrary to the Word of God. It is an urgent situation, and John wants to make sure that his congregation knows it. This phrase points us to the last days that they were in then, and we are in now. It's a specific epoch of history when both the true teaching of God's Word, and the false teaching of these antichrists is in the world. The idea of hour here is qualitative, not quantitative. Him telling his readers that they have a literal hour until Jesus came back, or even a short period of time would make no sense—He still has 3 and ½ more chapters to write...he does expect them to have time to receive this letter before Jesus comes, or he wouldn't write it! This word "hour" is used this way all over the New Testament (see John 12:23, 12:27, 7:30).

**and just as you heard that antichrist is coming,** But, John doesn't want us to be blind to the fact that even from the beginning of church history, the lawless, confusion-sowing, chaos-producing spirit of Antichrist has been known to be in the world, and that we shouldn't be surprised that there is false teaching. The matter-of-fact way that the Antichrist is mentioned over and over again in the New Testament suggests that it was common for the Apostles to mention this man of lawlessness in their teaching to the church. This is the same individual whom Jesus identified as the one who causes "the abomination of desolation" in Matt 24:15 and Paul calls "the lawless one" in 2 Thess 2:8. The term "Antichrist" combines two Greek words, that carry the sense of "instead of" or "against" Christ. Jesus warned the apostles of the coming of "false christs" who would deceive many. This is the one who Paul refers to in **2 Thess 2:1-8 3 No one is to deceive you in any way! For it will not come unless the apostasy comes first,** In other words, a great falling away or renouncing of the True Faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior by many people will occur before Jesus comes back. What will happen next is that (as it says in verse 7-8) **only He who now restrains will do so until He is removed. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed,** In other words, there is a specific someone who restrains this final and chief antichrist from being revealed, or disclosed. The restrainer will one day be removed, and then, as John continues in verse 4: **and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.** This is what Daniel (three times (9:27; 11:31; 12:11) and Jesus in Matthew 24 (15-16) refer to as the Abomination of Desolation, or the detestable thing which causes a devastation, or something to be laid waste. Both John and Paul typically taught churches about this guy (2 Thess 2:5). He will claim to be Christ and eventually exalt himself above God (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt 24:15).

**"even now many antichrists have come."** John says, "even now many antichrists have come." These many antichrists, whom John already sees in the world in his day, are the false teachers. He's going to confront some of their specific teachings in 1 John 2:22 **22 Who is the liar except the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.** And again in **2 John 7 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.** He's going to identify the spirit

behind their teachings in 1 Joh 4:2-3 saying **2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now it is already in the world.** So, we see that this spirit of lawlessness, the “do anything you want, it’s o.k., God will still accept you” is contrary to the gospel. A continual practice of sin is never part of the “abiding” experience in Christ. This heresy is a denial of the power and mission of Jesus, who came in the flesh to pay for our sins, so that we wouldn’t have to be a slave to them. The failure to deny fleshly appetites ends up in embracing sensuality, and then ultimately in a denial of the power of Jesus’ death on the cross. It’s not the road that you want to be on, folks! Run back to Jesus, and satisfy your thirst at the river of Living Water instead! They serve as forerunners of the ultimate and final Antichrist. And their teaching of sensuality and fulfilling the fleshly appetites is a denial of who Jesus is as Christ, as Messiah, as Son of God and Son of Man, and specifically the power of His saving work on the cross. This is what identifies false teachers with the future false Christ, the antichrist. Their teaching denies sin, and the need for forgiveness, so denies Jesus’ mission as Christ, who came in the flesh to die for our sins. So he calls them antichrists as well. But not only that, John identifies a specific spirit of lawlessness, an unwillingness to obey God, a rebelliousness that these people have. They simply will not come to God on His terms, choosing instead to do things their own way.

**“from this we know that it is the last hour.”** John repeats that “it is the last hour” for emphasis. He wants to make sure that The Church knows that these false teachers are active and sowing confusion in the church, so that they will not fall victim to their false teaching.

**19 They went out from us**--John emphasizes that these false teachers were never really part of those who were teaching the gospel in truth, although they may have been identified with it at one point. John’s point is that the false teachers will be revealed by their departure, both from the Truth of God’s Word. These false teachers have “went out” departed from the True teaching of Christ and the true understanding of God’s Word in order to teach some version of the gospel, to teach “another christ”. (see 2 Cor 11 3-4, Gal 1:6-9)

**but they were not really of us**--So, we see that these false teachers not only departed from good doctrine, and began teaching another gospel, but they themselves did not continue in the faith. For someone who has walked and been in abiding relationship with the Lord, departing from Him could only be the act of a crazy person! But we need to remember that there are always tares among the wheat. There are those who claim to be a Christian, and maybe even think that they are, who are not, because they have not put their trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. So, we also need to make sure that we ourselves are continuing in the faith as we have been taught in God’s Word. We must cling to Jesus, and let the Holy Spirit teach us more about Him day-by-day. And we must be diligent, and, of course this means that we must remain in Christ. God does the calling John 6:44 **44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.** And God does the keeping John 10:27-30 **27 My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”** God is able to keep us, and lose none of us, if we want to abide in Him. And if we truly know Him, we will.