

1 John. 2:18-24 “Antichrist Is Coming”

For the Children: Children’s fairy stories often involve people hiding from a scary character -like Jack hiding from the giant. The Bible tells of some bad people called “antichrists.” “Antichrist” means that they are very much against the Lord Jesus and His people. Some of God’s children are scared of what a powerful antichrist might do to God’s people. But the Bible doesn’t tell us things to terrify us. It warns us about these things so that we can recognize those who hate the Lord – so we don’t follow their example; so we can be sure to believe what the Bible teaches us about the Lord Jesus and to keep on trusting Him and obeying His Word.

Questions: How does the Bible describe antichrists? Is the antichrist someone who only comes just before the world ends, or are there antichrists here already? Why should we not be terrified of antichrists?

Introduction:

First Point: The Identity of the Antichrist

- 1) Those Who Went Out: Antichrists are described as those who went out from the church. This happened by God’s will, so that it would become obvious that they were never truly “of us.” This does not undermine the doctrine of “perseverance of the saints” – it reinforces it.
- 2) Not of the Truth: Antichrists also lie – that is, they do are not committed to the Truth. They are committed instead to heresies. The Lord enables His people to recognize who is of the truth and who is against it. See 1 John.4:1-6.
- 3) Deniers of the Christ: At the heart of the heresies of the Antichrists is their denial of Christ – His divinity, humanity and saving work as Messiah. These are truths that true Christians confess.
- 4) The “Anti” in the Antichrists: The prefix “anti” means that antichrists are strongly opposed to Christ and to His people. Many may be those who have become especially hostile after exiting the church. Some may be political leaders; others, proponents of false religion or philosophy – beasts of the sea and earth (Rev.13).

Second Point: The Arrival of the Antichrist

- 1) In the Last Hour: Antichrist(s) come in the Last Days/Hour = the time between Christ’s first and second coming. See Heb.1;2; 1 Peter.1:20; 1 John.2:18; Matt.24:36. We can therefore expect antichrists in our time.
- 2) The One and the Many: John refers to both antichrist (singular) and antichrists (plural). He seems more interested in the many with whom the church regularly has to deal. – also in 1 John.4:1-6 and 2 John.:7. The “abomination of desolation” in Dan. 9-11 and Matt.24:15-16 probably refer to individuals who desecrated the Temple. 2 Thess.2 may be speaking of the same event as Matt. 24, the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in AD 70. When John wrote, his readers certainly expected the coming of antichrist (2:18). But John sees the appearance of antichrists (plural) as related to this expectation – “*just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many...*”: The absence of the word “the” in front of the word “antichrist” could indicate a characteristic instead of an individual person.

Third Point: The Christian Response to the Antichrist

- 1) Recognizing Antichrists: Implicitly, John is warning his readers to learn to recognize antichrists. See 1 John.4:1-6 on “testing the spirits” and 2 John. 7 on watching for deceivers. It is important for us to be alert for attempts to coerce or seduce God’s people into disobeying the Lord. We are all susceptible to such pressures.
- 2) Continue Confessing Christ: Above all, we must keep on faithfully confessing Christ as God, man, Lord and Saviour. Note the warning of 2 Tim.2:12.
- 3) Following the Old Paths: Our confession needs to be according to that which the church has heard and believed from the beginning (v.24). We must be found abiding in the truth.

Conclusion: