



ABIDE - A SERIES THRU 1 JOHN

LESSON 5: THE LAST HOUR

Background

Although the epistle we call 1 John does not identify its author, the early church ascribed it to the apostle John and its language is very similar to John's Gospel. Most conservative scholars believe the book was written in the late first century (after AD 70). John wrote to Christians but the book does not identify any specific church or region. Many have argued that John wrote to Christians in Asia Minor, perhaps even in Ephesus.

Warning

Having just encouraged his readers to "not love the world or the things in the world" (1 John 2:15), John now warns them that they are living in the "last hour," an era of deception. In this era of deception there are many antichrists that denies that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah). By denying the Son they deny the Father also. (1 John 2:22-23) So a natural question presented is what can we do to be prepared to withstand the false teaching? The flip side of the coin is what makes people susceptible to false teaching.

1. **The "last hour" warning (2:18-19)**: Having just warned his readers not to love the world or the things of the world (2:15-17), John announces that it is the "last hour" — pointing to a climax in world history. They were living, and we are living, in the "last hour" before Jesus returns and implements his kingdom. This era will be characterized by deception, and just as "the Antichrist is coming" many have already come.

— the antichrists departed from the apostolic circle because "they did not belong to us" (2:19). Zane Hodges writes: "Heresy in the Christian church...always unmasks a fundamental disharmony with the spirit and doctrine of the apostles." What is heresy? And under what circumstances should we use that label?

— the label "antichrists" tells us that what they teach and how they behave is a denial of Jesus Christ

2. **The anointing and the truth (2:20-23)**: John tells his readers two critical realities they need to rely on to withstand the antichrists: (1) they have an anointing and (2) they know the truth.

— the "anointing" is almost certainly a reference to the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to send, and who is said to "teach" (2:27)

— the antichrists deny that Jesus is the Messiah (God's appoint savior of the world), and by denying the Son they deny the Father also (2:22-23)

3. **Withstanding the heresy (2:24-27)**: John says the key is in the truth they already know (2:24), and in remaining "in Him" (2:27). They do not need someone new from the antichrists because their "anointing teaches you about all things" (2:27).

— Based on what John wrote, does his audience sound like new believers or mature believers?

— John says the antichrists are trying to "deceive you" (2:26). We need to expect deception. (Compare Matthew 24:4-5, 11; John 8:44) What would make us susceptible to being deceived?

— We need to be grounded in the truth (2:24). How do we do that? (Compare Ephesians 4:14; 1 John 4:1)

— We need to beware philosophies that undermine foundational truths (2:25).