

1 John 2:18-29

The Two Spirits at Work in the World

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which 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 they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. 27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

Intro: Scene in Luke's Gospel Ch. 9 – James and John – Fire from heaven to toast the Samaritans

A) Jesus rebukes them – you do not know what Spirit you are of.

B) That is such a pertinent line that is so applicable to our day and age.

C) See There are two dominant spirits in the world today.

On the one hand you have the Spirit of Antichrist that is against everything that is of God

A) That Spirit is growing in dominance in our day and age

B) Then there is the Holy Spirit – who is also moving and working in powerful ways in our world today.

C) Revival happens when the Holy Spirit is poured out afresh and anew in a family, church, city – Nation

In the passage before us John Contrast these two spirits- Consider first the Spirit of Antichrist

A) Context: 18 Little children, it is the last hour; “The last hour” or “the last times” are phrases that describe a *kind* of time, not a *duration* of time.

B) “The last hour began back in John's day 1st century. *But has been growing in intensity ever since.*

C) Paul the Apostle in 1st and 2nd Timothy 4 described the last days as a time marked by

- They will not tolerate sound doctrine
- Follow teachers who will tell them what they want to hear
- Depart from the truth to follow fables – The Shack
- Christians will be departing from the faith
- Giving heed to false ideologies – he describes as doctrines of demons
- Hardened hearts toward the truth
- Getting side tracked on secondary issues

So Last hour = last days

A) In the Last days: The Spirit of Antichrist will be prevalent

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

B) Now The term, “antichrist,” is used in the Bible only by John (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

C) Here the phrase Antichrist we think of that person in the book of Revelation who is possessed by the Devil himself –

D) The epitome of evil – but it is more than that and it can be much more subtle

The Spirit of Antichrist describes three things:

#1. A *spirit* in the world that opposes or denies Christ;

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. 1 John 4:3

The “spirit of antichrist” has been in the world since Satan declared war on God (cf. Gen. 3).

A)It is behind every false doctrine and every “religious” substitute for the realities Christians have in Christ.

B)The prefix *anti* actually has a dual meaning.

1)It can mean, in the Greek, “against” Christ

C)But it can also mean “instead of” Christ.

So Satan in his frenzy is *fighting* Christ and His eternal truth

A)But Satan is also *substituting* his counterfeits for the realities found only in our Lord Jesus.

B)So the term Antichrist speaks of #1. a *spirit* in the world that opposes or denies Christ;

C)#2 It is an ideology that embodies this spirit.

1)It is an ideology that opposes the Bible, that opposes the teachings of Jesus

D)An ideology that seeks to subtly change or contradict what the Bible says and what Jesus taught.

Started in the Garden: Satan to Eve – did God really say – eat and die

A)Is that really what that means ?

B)That thought is so rampant in-our society today to question the Bible on everything.

C)Is the Bible really true on what it says about marriage – gender – about Violence and rights

D)That is the Spirit of Antichrist – Question God and his authority

E)So the term antichrist speaks of #1. a *spirit* in the world that opposes or denies Christ;

1)#2 It is an ideology that embodies this spirit.

#3. Antichrist refers to a *person* who will head up the final world rebellion against Christ.

A)The world is being prepped right now to receive this leader who will come on the scene in the last of the last days

B)Before Jesus comes again at his 2nd coming

C)Now in this section of John’s letter – John is contrasting

1)This Spirit of Antichrist with – The work of the Holy Spirit

Consider the Characteristics of the spirit of Antichrist

A)#1 They have left the true teaching of Jesus. V.19
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 they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

B)This is an important thing to note: The Spirit of Antichrist is not some – Satan worshipping – group.

C)It is more of a subtle approach – It has roots in Christianity –

1)it can sound spiritual – but it has turn from the true Jesus

Happening all over the world.

A)Consider Canada and the UK which both have a rich history of Christian heritage are now both considered Post Christian nations

B)meaning that while Christianity still holds cultural significance,

1)the widespread practice of Christian faith has significantly declined,

C)and the country is no longer primarily defined by Christian beliefs and practices.

D)Key points in being considered post-Christian:

- Declining church attendance: A significant drop in the number of people regularly attending church services.
- Shifting demographics: Census data shows a growing percentage of people identifying with no religion.
- Cultural shift: A growing acceptance of secular values and lifestyles.

New Zealand is also considered a Post Christian nation.

A)NZ was once predominantly Christian.

B)Christianity was introduced to New Zealand by European missionaries in the early 19th century.

C)New Zealand was predominantly Christian during the time of European colonization.

D)But here are the Current demographics in NZ

1)In the 2023 census, 32.3% of New Zealanders identified as Christian, down from 36.5% in 2018.

E)51.6% of New Zealanders stated they had no religion, and 6.9% did not state a religion.

Unfortunately our nation is heading in that direction.

A)Christianity has been the prevalent religious belief in America since our inception – but it has been on decline in the last 60+yrs

B)Consider: In 1976 91% of Americans identified as Christian

C)Today of the 332 million people who make up the Population of America 67% or 224 million identify as Christian.

D)Now I know that sounds amazing – but it is also confusing.

E)Because the way our country has been going the last 2-3 decades

1)it sure doesn't seem like that 67% of our country is following Jesus.

Here is where those numbers become more realistic- of the 67% of Americans who identify as Christians

A)only 6% hold a Biblical World View

B)Only 6% are following what the Bible says about life, marriage, morals, etc

C)And get this: The number drops to 3% for those of us living on the West Coast

This makes John's statement about they went out from us because they were not really with us- make sense.

A)There are a lot of people who claim to be Christians – who are not living a Christian life at all.

B)They want to take a little bit of Jesus but not all of Jesus.

C)They accept Jesus and his teachings on their terms – I like this part but I reject that part.

D)I love what the Bible says about forgiveness and grace – but not what it says about sexuality.

1)Essentially rip out whole pages of their Bible

The Church itself can play into this too. Many Churches only teach topically

A)So they get to pick and choose what they are going to talk about – avoid the tough topics

B)When teaching through whole books of the Bible – You can't do that – You have to deal with it all.

C)So the Characteristics of the spirit of Antichrist #1 They have left the true teaching of Jesus. V.19

#2 They deny the Deity of Jesus, - 22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

A)In the Religious philosophy of the Spirit of Antichrist – Jesus isn't God – Self is God.

1)Promotes the worship of Self

B)I think where we see this so clearly today is in the amount of people who profess to be Christians – 1)live completely different lifestyles

Consider T. Swift – Talented artist.

A)Her Eras Tour has been the most successful concert tour of all time

B)Her tour boosted the Economy the tour contributed over \$5B dollars to the GDP of the United States

C)Did you know that T. Swift was raised in a Christian home –

D)She even claims today to be a Christian – but her lifestyle and opinions say otherwise

Did you know she puts out a clean version of her music – but the original is full of explicit lyrics and content

A) Her latest album is her most explicit yet – containing 57 swear words and a ton of sexual and explicit content

B) Back in June of 2022 after the Supreme Court overturned ROE V. Wade

C) Swift was complaining online about what she calls the “oppressive” nature of the Christian sexual ethic

“I’m absolutely terrified that this is where we are – that after so many decades of people fighting for women’s rights to their own bodies, today’s decision has stripped us of that.” Politicians disguise their stance “behind Tennessee Christian values,” she said, adding, “I live in Tennessee. I am Christian. That’s not what we stand for.”- Taylor Swift

This is the nature of the Spirit of Antichrist – I believe in Jesus – Jesus is cool

A) I might even identify with Jesus – Say I am a Christian

B) But I don’t follow Jesus in every area of my life. Don’t tell me what I can or can’t do with my body.

C) Don’t tell me what is right and wrong I will figure that out on my own

D) That is the spirit of Antichrist

In the last of the last days when the Antichrist person comes into power it will be violent and direct

A) But the Bible says that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light

B) His approach is subtle he disguises the truth in many lies.

Let me give you another example – Elon Musk

A) Brilliant guy – I love what he is doing right now to uncover GOVT waste

B) Keep going Elon – get our spending under control

C) Elon Musk ideas about Jesus interesting

- He has said that he believes the teachings of Jesus are good and wise.

- He has said that he believes Christian beliefs lead to the greatest happiness.
- He has said that he is open to believing in things that are proportionate to the information he receives.

But Musk describes himself as “cultural Christian,” Musk indicated his guiding belief goes back to that of seeking greater understanding. “That is my religion, for the lack of a better way to describe it, it’s really a religion of curiosity,” “The religion of greater enlightenment. ...

The religion of greater enlightenment – picks and chooses from all the religions

A) what fits with my own system of beliefs

B) But the Religion of Enlightenment denies that Jesus is God – He is the absolute authority

1) This is the most popular ideology in the world today –

C) A religion that is a potpourri of many belief systems

D) A little of this – a little of that – Pick and choose what I am going to focus on and cling to.

Joel Olsteen: Who doesn’t talk about sin, hell or damnation in his sermons. “I don’t want to beat people down – I want to lift them up.”

A) Lift them up to where?

B) Your best life now!

C) In my humble opinion – that type of mentality is only setting people up to receive the Antichrist

His message: Follow me for your best life now.

A) We can all Coexist – no matter your faith

B) Mentor: Sheep and Goats - Greatest of all time!

C) Guys this is dangerous

So the more that we are living in this last hour – these last days

A) We will be encouraged to depart from the truth and embrace this ideology of Antichrist

B) The traditional teachings of Jesus are too narrow – Follow this instead.

C) Jesus and or Jesus plus anything is the Spirit of Antichrist

So the Spirit of Antichrist is at Work today – but there is another Spirit at Work – the Holy Spirit

A) Consider this Gen Z, makes up the majority of today's college students.

B) According to the Barna Research group only 17% of that generation call themselves Christians,

C) But the Holy Spirit is at work in that generation.

Most of you are probably familiar with the move of God on the campus at Ashbury University

A) It started as a normal chapel service on Feb 8, 2023 – turned into a multi week move of God.

B) Students met around the clock for several weeks – worshipping seeking God

1) Reports of healings, miracles, salvations, rededications...

C) Over the course of several weeks upwards of 70K people attended

Then in the fall of 2023 there was a gathering at Auburn U in Alabama - Called Unite Auburn

A) It was supposed to be a gathering of about 500 students – but 5,000 showed up.

B) Jonathan Pokluda a pastor from Waco TEXAS along with Author Jennie Allen were the scheduled speakers for the evening

C) As worship started Pastor Pokluda sensed a deep hunger and thirst for Jesus in the students that night.

God moved powerfully, students responded to the gospel.

A) Someone asked if there was water nearby so he could be baptized –

B) There was a pond down the road, - so they left the Auditorium – thousands of students followed to the pond

C) Where 350 students end up being baptized.

That move of God at Auburn U resulted in follow up gatherings called Unite US on 11 College Campuses

A) like Florida State, University of Georgia and Texas A&M—where a combined 70,000 students have gathered

B) The results have been astounding - organizers have documented some 5,000 salvation decisions and 2,000 baptisms.

C) 10,000 students gathered at Arkansas U For a Unite US event there.

D) Fall of 2024 at Ohio State University – a gathering was planned by members of the Football team.

1) 1500 people in attendance with over 60 students getting baptized

In January 2025 40K college students gathered in an arena in Georgia for Passion 2025 –

A) Another 35k gathered in Cape Town South Africa

B) Last week 1200 college students gathered at OSU for a night of worship and seeking God

C) In these last days the Holy Spirit is at Work.

We Saw it in NZ – God's Favor was poured out – These churches are doing so well. Very Encouraging

A) This is what John is referring to when he says in V. 20 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

B) The word *anoint* reminds us of the OT practice of pouring oil on the head of a person being set apart for special service.

1) A priest was anointed (Ex. 28:41), and so was a king (1 Sam. 15:1) or a prophet (1 Kings 19:16).

C) A NT Christian is anointed, not with literal oil, over the head but by the Spirit of God in our hearts!

27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you

D) The Holy Spirit abides in us!

21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

John is not suggesting that we no longer need teachers or to study the Bible –

A)He is letting us know that the Holy Spirit in our hearts confirms to us that what we are listening to is truth

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit:

John 14

- The Spirit of truth V.17
- The Helper V.26
- The teacher V.26
- He brings the truth to our remembrance. V.26

John 15

- He testifies of Jesus and His teachings V. 26-27

John 16

- He convicts of the World of sin and their need for Jesus V.8-10
- He guides in the truth V.13
- He tells of things to come. V.13
- He will glorify Jesus V.14
- He will confirm and exalt the message of Jesus V.15

The Holy Spirit in our hearts is like an alarm –Goes off – AVOID - A compass keeps us on the true North

A)The Key to the Christian life is learning to walk in the Spirit – be led by the spirit

B)Knowing this: The Holy Spirit will never contradict the word of God

1)and will also be pushing us in the direction of Jesus

So In light of the work of the Holy Spirit in us

John gives us two Admonitions

24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

Abide in the Truth

A)True doorway to Eternal life

28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

B)Abide in Jesus – Stay close to Jesus – Keep it simply Jesus

C)Abide in the truth – Abide in Jesus

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

How to live in this broken world?

A)Abide in the truth – Not Swayed

B)Abide in Him – be Gracious toward the doubters

C)Result: You will not be ashamed at His coming