

Study Guide

A Warning Against Antichrists

Part II

1 John 2:22–27

Scripture Text

“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. As for you, let that which you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”

— 1 John 2:22–27

Overview

John continues his urgent warning about antichrists—false teachers who deny essential truths about Jesus Christ. In this section he clearly describes their characteristics and then gives practical cautions so that believers may remain safe from their deception. The central exhortation is to “abide” (continue, remain) in the gospel truth that was heard from the beginning.

Key Theme: Abiding in the apostolic gospel and in Christ Himself is the believer’s sure protection against the deception of antichrists.

Sermon Outline

I. The Characteristics of Antichrists (vv. 22–23)

John does not leave us guessing. He gives three clear marks by which antichrists may be known.

(a) They Are Deceivers

The liar is the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. The word “deceive” (Greek *planaō*) means to cause someone to wander off the path. Antichrists present a lie as truth and lead people into error.

Important distinction: While anyone who rejects Jesus is “anti-Christ” in a general sense, John’s primary concern is with those who actively persuade others to follow false teaching.

Modern forms of deception:

- Corruption of Jesus’ mission rather than His person (e.g., teaching that His primary purpose was to remove all sickness or guarantee financial prosperity).
- Scripture shows Jesus healed selectively as signs of Messianic authority, not as a blanket promise that every believer will be healed or made wealthy (cf. 2 Tim. 4:20; 2 Cor. 12:8–9; John 5:1–9).
- Jesus came to seek and save the lost and to reconcile sinners to God—not primarily to alleviate temporal symptoms of the Fall.

(b) They Are Deniers

To deny that Jesus is the Christ is to deny both the Son and the Father. The Gnostic error of John’s day denied Jesus’ true humanity (that He came in the flesh). Other denials include treating Jesus as merely a man who temporarily received the Christ-Spirit.

Broader application: Denial is not limited to formal heresy. It includes refusing Christ's rightful Lordship over one's life and rejecting the gospel when it is presented. "No one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6).

Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

(c) They Are Departers

They went out from the fellowship (v. 19) because they first departed from Christ and from the truth. Abandonment of the faith reveals that they "were not of us."

It is possible to hold a form of godliness for a long time—attend church, make a profession, even preach—yet never possess a renewed heart (example: Demas, 2 Tim. 4:10).

Perseverance is the evidence of genuine new birth. Those who abandon the faith do so because they were never truly born again.

II. The Cautions Against Antichrists (vv. 24–27)

John moves from diagnosis to protection. Three "precious remedies" guard the believer.

(a) Continue in the Gospel

"Let that which you heard from the beginning abide in you." The key word is *abide* (Greek *menō*—to remain, continue, stay). This is the same word Jesus used in John 15:4–7.

What was heard "from the beginning" is the historical gospel of Jesus the God-man—His condescension, sinlessness, and atoning work.

Critical insight: It is possible to sit under faithful preaching and still not have the truth abide in the heart. The difference between those who remain and those who depart is whether the truth has penetrated, captured, and become an object of love (cf. 2 Thess. 2:10—"the love of the truth").

Continuing in the gospel is not mere routine; it is an ongoing love-affair with the gospel and with Christ Himself.

(b) Comprehend Our Inheritance

"And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life." Eternal life is both present possession and future glory. It begins at the moment of faith and is a quality of relationship—"that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

Those who possess eternal life are kept secure in Christ's hand and the Father's hand (John 10:28–29). This security places the believer beyond the ultimate reach of antichrist's deception.

(c) Celebrate the Gift of the Holy Spirit

The "anointing" (Greek *chrisma*) that believers have received is the Holy Spirit Himself. He abides in every true believer and teaches about all things, always glorifying Christ and bringing His words to remembrance (John 16:14).

John does not mean Christians need no human teachers (he himself is teaching them). Rather, the Spirit provides an internal safeguard that exposes lies and confirms the truth of the apostolic gospel.

John Stott's summary: "Here, then, are the two safeguards against error—the apostolic Word and the anointing Spirit. Both are received at conversion."

Mere doctrinal knowledge is insufficient. The goal is intimate, relational abiding in the Person of Christ. "None who abide in Him can be deceived."

Discussion Questions

1. Why does John devote so much attention to the subject of antichrists? What does this reveal about the seriousness of false teaching?

2. How can someone affirm orthodox truths about Jesus' person yet still be a deceiver regarding His mission or work? Can you think of contemporary examples?
3. What is the difference between being deceived and being a deceiver? Why does John emphasize the latter?
4. In what ways might a person “deny” Christ without formally rejecting the doctrine of His deity or humanity?
5. How does the example of Demas (2 Tim. 4:10) illustrate the possibility of long-term outward association with the church without genuine new birth?
6. What does it mean practically for the gospel to “abide” in us? How is this different from merely hearing or knowing gospel facts?
7. Why does John link abiding in the truth with abiding in the Son and the Father (v. 24)? What does this teach about the nature of saving faith?
8. How does the promise of eternal life serve as both an incentive and a protection against deception?
9. What role does the Holy Spirit (“the anointing”) play in guarding believers from error? How does this work together with the written Word and gifted teachers in the church?
10. Reflect on John Stott’s statement about the two safeguards. Which of these do you most need to strengthen in your own life right now?

Personal Application

1. **Examine your affections.** Is your relationship with the gospel primarily intellectual, or is there a living love for Christ and His truth? Ask the Lord to renew your delight in the gospel.
2. **Feed daily on Christ.** Just as Israel gathered fresh manna each day, commit to regular, prayerful engagement with Scripture that centers on Jesus.
3. **Test what you hear.** When teaching emphasizes health, wealth, or temporal relief as the primary purpose of Christ’s work, measure it against the biblical mission of saving sinners from sin.
4. **Value faithful teaching.** Do not take a gospel-centered local church for granted. Faithful exposition of the Word is a God-given safeguard.
5. **Rest in security.** If you are abiding in Christ, you are held in His hand and the Father’s hand. Let this assurance fuel perseverance rather than presumption.

Key Verses to Memorize

“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

1 John 2:22

“As for you, let that which you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.”

1 John 2:24

“And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you... and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”

1 John 2:27

Prayer Points

- Thank God for the clear warning of Scripture and for faithful teachers who guard the gospel.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to keep the truth abiding in your heart and to increase your love for the gospel.
- Pray for discernment to recognize subtle distortions of Christ’s mission in contemporary teaching.

- Intercede for those who have departed from the faith, that the Lord would grant them repentance and genuine new birth.
- Praise God for the security of eternal life and the promise that no one can snatch His people from His hand.

Closing Reflection

“Our world is rife with antichrists. Apostasy is the fruit of mechanical religion that has missed the point of ‘abiding in Christ.’ To continue in the gospel is personal and relational. The gospel is Jesus Christ. Not simply data, but His person. Feed on Him. Commune with Him. Worship Him. Renew your mind with Him. He is our cleft in the rock—to protect us and keep us.”

Soli Deo Gloria