

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025 AM
AUTHENTIC FAITH: Truth or Consequences
Mike Teel, Pastor

FOCAL PASSAGE:

I John 2:18-19

¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

WHAT _____ IS IT?

I John 2:18

¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

1. GUARD AGAINST _____

--Before John explains the tragic consequences of turning from the truth, he emphasizes the seriousness of the matter. He does so by using two special terms: "the last hour" and "antichrist." Both terms make it clear that Christians are living in an hour of crisis and we must guard against the errors of the enemy.

2. A NEW _____

--The Last Hour (The Last Time in some translations) is a term that reminds us that a new age or period of time has dawned on the world.

I John 2:8

⁸ Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

--Since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God is doing a "new thing" in this world. All of the Old Testament history prepared the way for the work of Christ on the cross. All history since that time is merely preparation for "the end," when Jesus will come and establish His kingdom. There is nothing more that God must do for the salvation of sinners! It is complete! We see this in the example of a young couple who are betrothed and are waiting for the time for the groom to go get his bride.

John 14:1-6

¹ "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

3. THE LAST _____

--You may ask, "But if it was 'the last hour' in John's day, why has Jesus not yet returned? This is an excellent question and Scripture give us the answer: God is not limited by time the way His creation or creatures are. God works in human time, but He is above time.

II Peter 3:8

⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

--"The Last Hour" began in John's day and has been growing in intensity ever since. Jesus Himself spoke about this time.

Matthew 24:1-14

¹ Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." ³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" ⁴ Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹ "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

--There were ungodly false teachers in John's day, and during the intervening centuries they have increased both in number and influence. "The Last Hour" or "The Last Times" are phrases that describe a kind of time, not duration of time. Paul, Like John, observed characteristics of his time, and we see the same characteristics today in even greater intensity. In other words, we Christians have always been living in "the last hour"—in crisis days. It is therefore important that you know what you believe and why you believe it.

WHAT _____ IS IT?

I John 2:18

¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

1. THE _____ OF ANTICHRIST

--The second term, "antichrist" is used in the Bible only by John (I John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and II John 7). It describes three things:

1. A spirit in the world that opposes or denies Christ.
2. The false teachers who embody the spirit that denies or opposes Christ.
3. A person who will head up the final world rebellion against Christ.

--The "Spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:3) has been in the world since Satan declared war on God (Genesis 3). This "Spirit of antichrist" is behind every false doctrine and every "religious" substitute for the realities Christians have in Christ.

2. WHAT DOES THE TERM _____ MEAN?

--That prefix "ANTI" actually has dual meanings. It can mean, in the Greek, both "against" Christ and "instead of Christ". Satan in his frenzy is fighting Christ and His eternal truth, and he is substituting his counterfeits for the realities found only in the Lord Jesus. The "Spirit of antichrist" is in the world today and will eventually lead to the appearance of a "satanic superman" whom the Bible calls "Antichrist" (Capital A). He is called "The man of lawlessness."

I Thessalonians 2:1-12

¹ Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷ For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

--This passage explains there are two forces at work in today's world: TRUTH is working through the true Church by the Holy Spirit, and EVIL is working by the energy of Satan. The Holy Spirit, in Christians, is the sheriff of today's world. It is what is holding back the lawlessness, full attack of Satan on our world today.

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

--John has more to say about this world ruler and his evil system in the Book of Revelation particularly 13:1-18; 16:13; and 19:20.

THE MAIN _____

--Does it make any difference what you believe? It makes all the difference in the world! We are living in crisis days—in the last hour—and the spirit of antichrist is working in the world! It is vitally important that you know and believe the TRUTH and be able to detect lies when they come your way. John's letter gives us three outstanding marks of the false teachers who were controlled by the "spirit of antichrist." We will spend the next few week exploring these marks.

LIVE IT OUT

1. Have you made an authentic decision to follow Christ?
2. Are you a member of a local church?
3. Are you prepared for the rapture of the church?