

1 John 2:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

Analysis

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. John shifts to eschatological warning, addressing believers as "little children" (*paidia*) with pastoral concern. "It is the last time" (*eschate hora estin*)—*eschate hora* (last hour) indicates the final epoch of history inaugurated by Christ's first coming. The entire church age is the "last time" before Christ's return. This creates urgency—history approaches consummation; believers must live accordingly.

"As ye have heard that antichrist shall come" (*kathōs ēkousate hoti antichristos erchetai*)—"antichrist" (*antichristos*) means against or instead of Christ—one who opposes and/or impersonates Christ. Early Christian teaching anticipated a final, singular antichrist (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). "Even now are there many antichrists" (*kai nyn antichristoi polloi gegonasin*)—the perfect tense "are" (*gegonasin*) indicates they have arisen and remain. While expecting one final antichrist, John identifies "many" present antichrists—those embodying antichrist's spirit by denying Christ's person and work.

"Whereby we know that it is the last time" (*hothen ginōskomen hoti eschate hora estin*)—the proliferation of antichrists evidences the last hour's reality. This isn't date-setting but theological discernment: opposition to Christ intensifies as history moves toward consummation. The presence of false teachers denying essential

Christian truth confirms believers live in the end times, heightening need for vigilance and faithfulness.

Historical Context

Jewish apocalyptic expected intensifying evil before Messiah's coming. Daniel prophesied about a final persecutor (Daniel 7:25, 11:36). Jesus warned of false Christs and false prophets (Matthew 24:24). Paul described "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). John's contribution is identifying the antichrist spirit's essential characteristic: denial of Christ's incarnation (verse 22, 4:3). This provided crucial test for discerning false teaching.

John's readers faced proto-Gnostic teachers denying Christ came in flesh—the antichrist spirit incarnate in their time. Throughout church history, various figures have been identified as "the antichrist"—Roman emperors, popes, Islamic leaders, totalitarian dictators. While speculation continues, John's practical point remains: antichrist spirit manifests whenever Christ's person or work is denied. This occurs in every age until the final Antichrist appears.

The concept of "last hour" shaped Christian eschatological consciousness. The apostolic age understood Christ's first coming inaugurated the final epoch. The "already/not yet" tension—Christ has come, yet will come again—characterizes the entire church age as "last hour." This creates urgency for evangelism, holiness, and endurance while avoiding date-setting presumption.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing you live in the 'last hour' (final epoch before Christ's return) create appropriate urgency without anxious date-setting?
2. What contemporary teachings or movements exhibit the 'antichrist spirit' by denying essential truths about Christ's person or work?
3. How should awareness of 'many antichrists' shape your discernment regarding teachers, teachings, and spiritual claims?

Interlinear Text

Παιδία	ἐσχάτη	ώρα	ἐστίν	καὶ	καθὼς	ἠκούσατε	ὅτι
Little children	the last	time	it is	and	as	ye have heard	that
G3813	G2078	G5610	G2076	G2532	G2531	G191	G3754
ὁ	ἀντίχριστοι	ἔρχεται	καὶ	νῦν	ἀντίχριστοι	πολλοὶ	
G3588	antichrist	shall come	and	now	antichrist	many	
	G500	G2064	G2532	G3568	G500	G4183	
γεγόνασιν	ὅθεν	γινώσκομεν	ὅτι	ἐσχάτη	ώρα	ἐστίν	
are there	whereby	we know	that	the last	time	it is	
G1096	G3606	G1097	G3754	G2078	G5610	G2076	

Additional Cross-References

1 John 4:3 (References Christ): And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

2 John 1:7 (References Christ): For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

1 John 2:22 (References Christ): Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Matthew 24:24 (References Christ): For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Matthew 24:5 (References Christ): For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

1 John 4:1 (Parallel theme): Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Peter 2:1 (Parallel theme): But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Mark 13:6 (References Christ): For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Matthew 24:11 (Parallel theme): And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

2 Peter 3:3 (Parallel theme): Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,