

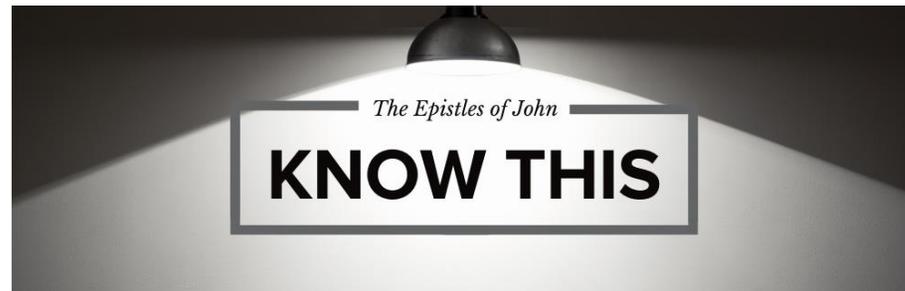


Pray

How does John's warning against antichrists inform your praying?

How can this passage impact the way you pray for your church? Other people in your life?

Write out and then pray the ways this passage moves you to praise God.



First Things for the Last Hour | 1 John 2:18-29

Study Guide 7 for sermon on 2/14/2021



Introduction

A few years ago there was a news story about a 400-year old historic tree in New Jersey that had to be cut down due to disease. By all outward appearances the tree looked healthy and majestic. People in the community were confused and upset. Arborists explained there was a disease that was killing the tree from the inside. The tree had weathered brutal winters and urban development, but its end came due to a sickness from within.

In this passage, John warns of an evil within the church that has the potential to do catastrophic damage. What is that evil? It is diminishing the person and work of Jesus Christ. Who is spreading this evil? Those whom John calls "antichrists." The church has faced 2,000 years of external threats. None of them have been effective. The threat that is most dangerous is the diminishing of Jesus from within the church itself.



Overview

Context: We finally get to the drama that has led to this letter. John doesn't give a total replay of what led to the church split, but we can infer that those who left did so because they rejected the place of Christ in God's salvation plan. What does John call the Christ-denying leaders of the schism? They are antichrists. Reader, beware.

Structure:

A¹ End-times context for the discussion (18-19)

B¹ The anointing (20)

C¹ Affirmation the readers have the truth (21)

D¹ The lie: Jesus is not the Christ (22)

E¹ The one who denies the Son doesn't have the Father (23a)

E² The one who confesses the Son has the Father (23b)

D² Let the first truth received remain (24a)

C² Don't be deceived by lies (26)

B² The anointing (27)

A² End-times context for the discussion (28)

Engage

1. In verse 18, John uses the term “antichrist” in two different ways. Is the antichrist (singular) a present or future reality? Are the antichrists (plural) a present or future reality?
2. Using verse 22, how can the church identify those antichrists who have come?
3. We often think of the antichrist only as the singular great nemesis of Christ and His church. Seminary professor Michael Kuykendall explains who John's “antichrists” were/are:

By John's era, two types of anti-Messiah-like figures were prominent in Judaism. One was a political, military tyrant from the outside who opposes and oppresses Israel, and one was a false teacher from within Israel who deceives the people. “Antichrist” is found only five times, once as a plural (1 Jn. 2:18 [twice], 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7), and all refer to false teachers infiltrating the first-century church. These antichrists are forerunners of those who harass and persecute Christians throughout the centuries.

“Lions, Locusts, and the Lamb: Interpreting Key Images in Revelation”

4. What are the dangers of too much speculation about “The Antichrist” to come verses those antichrists who are here?
5. According to verse 19, how was the schism a kindness from God to those who remained?
6. How many times does the word “abide” or “remain” appear in verses 24-28? Now, read John 15:1-8. How does that passage help you understand the meaning of abide/remain? How else does John 15:1-8 help you understand our current passage?
7. John speaks of those who are trying to deceive the church in verse 26. Why is it important to expose false teachers in the church? What is the best way to do this?
8. Read Paul's parting words to the Elders of the church in Ephesus in Acts 20:27-31. What similarities do you see between Paul's words and John's words? How do a church's Elders protect them from antichrists/wolves?