

Sermon Notes

The anti-Christian Message

1 John 2:18-23

March 18, 2007

A. Introduction – the text

B. It's Eleven p.m.! 1 John 2:18

1. Matthew 24 & 25 and Mark 13 record the ...
2. Matthew 25:1–13
 - a. Jesus tells the story of ...
 - b. What happens at midnight (verse 6)?
 - c. this story warns us to be alert for ...
3. Hebrews 9:26 tells us the work of the cross takes place at ...
4. Romans 13:11–12; what is now nearer than when we believed?
5. What should this truth mean to us?

C. There Are Prowlers About! 1 John 2:18–19, 22

1. Obadiah 1:5; what profession is busy at night?
2. In this passage, the term anti-Christ is used ...
3. 1 John 4:1–3, 2 John 1:7: What does the spirit of anti-Christ refuse to acknowledge?

4. In the O_____ discourse, Jesus answers the questions of the disciples given in Matthew 24:3; what is the main attempt of the “anti-Christ” Jesus warns about in 24:5, 23–24?

5. What does Paul tell us about these in

a. Acts 20:30?

b. 2 Thessalonians 2:3

6. Matthew 7:15; how do these anti-Christ present themselves?

7. What is “The anti-Christian Message (verse 22)?

D. Our Alarm System Is On 1 John 2:20–21

1. What do all Christians know?
2. When does this take place (Titus 3:5–6, John 15:26)?
3. What is one purpose of this (John 16:13)?
4. When can we count upon this (John 14:16–17)?

E. Do You Know Where Your Children Are? 1 John 2:23

1. What is the “black and white” truth here (see also 1 John 5:12)?
2. My responsibility is ...

-{1}. 1 John 2:18-23 The anti-Christian Message

A. Introduction

1. warnings ^{-{2}}.

- a. A counsellor at church camp was dealing with a nine-year-old boy who started to cry when on the first night they turned out the cabin lights. "Are you afraid of the dark?" the counsellor asked. "No," the boy replied; "I just didn't want to be attacked by the 'killer rabbits.'" Some older kids at home had told him that there were "killer rabbits" who would come out at night and attack the campers.
- b. we hear a good many warnings from people, from the media, from authorities, and so on
 - (A) not all of them are genuine; many are spurious as the one this boy had received
 - (B) you may have received some of these in your e-mail about a new virus (actually, such e-mails themselves are often used as a means of spreading viruses)
 - (C) so it becomes very easy to disregard such warnings
 - (D) I remember that as a child I heard time after time (as you probably did, too), "Don't run out from between parked cars." But I was a pretty nippy little youngster – though you wouldn't know it now – and I took these warnings with a grain of salt ... until the day I was hit!
- c. but what the apostle John has to tell us today is for real and we cannot afford to disregard it; he gives to us
 - (A) a warning about a threat against us, and,
 - (B) a notification of the protection available to us

2. text: John writes in chapter 2, verses 18 to 23

- a. ¹⁸ *My little children, it is **the** last hour, and according as you once heard, 'an anti-Christ is coming', and now many anti-Christ are come. From this we know that it is **the** last hour.* ¹⁹ *These came out from among us but they were not **really** of us; for is if they were of us, they would have remained with us. But **this they did** so that they might be exposed, revealing that none of them are of us.* ²⁰ *And you, you have an anointing from the Holy One; all of you know.* ²¹ *I did not write to you because you do not know the truth, but rather because you do know it and because no falsehood is from the truth.* ²² *Who is the liar? Is it not anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the anti-Christ, the one who*

denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Everyone who denies the Son also does not have the Father; the one confessing the Son also has the Father.

3. today I would like to look at this passage, putting it under the following outline to help us to remember it:
- (A) It's Eleven p.m.!
 - (B) There Are Prowlers About!
 - (C) Our Alarm System is On
 - (D) Do You Know Where Your Children Are?

B. It's Eleven p.m.!

1. in verse 18 we read, "Children, it is the last hour ... from this we know that it is the last hour." (1 John 2:18 NAS)
2. Matthew 24 and 25 and Mark 13 record Jesus' discourse on the mount of Olives in the last week of His life
 - a. these chapters bear fairly heavily on today's passage
 - b. Matthew 25: 1-13 records the story of the 10 virgins
 - (A) who with their lamps awaited the bridegroom's arrival
 - (B) in verse 6 we read that at midnight the cry when up, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'
 - (C) five were foolish, the oil in their lamps all gone
 - (D) five were wise, and had provided for this with extra oil
 - (E) this story, Jesus said, describes the kingdom of heaven
 - (F) it very clearly portrays the return of Jesus Christ, who is the Bridegroom, and comes for His marriage supper
 - (G) it closes with the warning, "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour." (verse13 NAS)
3. John, then, in speaking of the last hour is using the same imagery as is used in Jesus' parable of the ten virgins
 - a. it's almost midnight

- b. the time of the consummation of this world age
 - c. it's 2300 hours; 11 p.m. (I almost so translated it)
 - d. for we live in the time of Christ's imminent return
 - e. the writer of the book of Hebrews knew that we live in this time, when talking of Christ's work on the cross he says, "Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Hebrews 9:26 NAS); it was the cross that ushered in the last hour
 - f. Paul knew this when he wrote, "And this *do*, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand." (Romans 13:11-12a NAS)
 - g. Augustine says, "the last hour is of long duration, yet it is the last" and Jean Calvin, "Nothing any longer remains but that Christ should appear for the redemption of the world ... {John} calls that 'the last time {or, hour}' in which all things are being so completed that nothing is left except the last revelation of Christ". —^{3}.
 - h. and we should know it, too, says John, and he gives proof
4. now this is a truth to which we may intellectually agree
- a. but it hasn't yet got to the core of our being
 - b. the teaching of the imminence – that it may occur at any instant – of the return of Jesus Christ
 - c. that before we get to the end of this message (no, I don't intend to be long!) Christ may appear in the heavens in order to snatch Christians from this earth to be with Him
 - d. is not given to us to be an intellectually absorbing truth
 - e. but that it may purify us; that it may set our priorities; that we may live our lives in the light of eternity
 - f. Anne Ross Cousin wrote these words —^{4}.

O Christ, He is the fountain, The deep, sweet well of love;
The steams on earth I've tasted More deep I'll drink above.

There to an ocean fulness His mercy doth expand
And glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land.

O I am my Beloved's, And my Beloved's mine;
He brings a poor vile sinner Into His 'house of wine.'

I stand upon His merit— I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land.

g. may this truth percolate through our being this morning

C. There Are Prowlers About!

1. when it's eleven p.m., and midnight is approaching
 - a. that's the time when the criminal element gets busy
 - b. the Bible talks about their activity, as in Obadiah 1:5, "If thieves came to you, If robbers by night—O how you will be ruined! —Would they not steal *only* until they had enough?..." (NAS)
 - c. as in the natural, so in the supernatural
 - d. as God's redemptive activity draws to completion, so Satan's attempts at opposition intensify
 - e. the enemy is prowling about seeking to devour

2. (an) anti-Christ is coming
 - a. anti-Christ, is used three ways in this short passage
 - (A) in verse 18, without an article, "... and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, ..." (NAS) denoting either a name or the anti-Christ nature and character
 - (B) again in verse 18, in the plural, "... even now many antichrists have arisen; ..." (NAS), denoting either those following the person named or those possessing that nature and character
 - (C) in verse 22, with the article, of a specific instance of a mark of this person, or of the nature and character
 - b. the word is only found in John epistles, and since they are pertinent to understanding what anti-Christ means, we should read the other two passages, both with the article:
 - (A) 1 John 4:1–3, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world." (NAS)
 - (B) 2 John 1:7, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist." (NAS)

- c. the prefix "anti-" has two significances
 - (A) it tells of being opposed (here, opposed to Christ)
 - (B) it tells of a substitution (here, a substitute for Christ)
 - (C) and both are present

3. who is anti-Christ?

- a. there have been many foolish statements on this subject over the years: when I was young, Evangelical Publishers was the major Christian bookstore in Toronto, and after the war they had to get rid of thousands of copies of one book with the title, "Is Mussolini the Anti-Christ"
- b. but what John is writing here is directly related to Jesus' Olivet discourse, which was provoked by the statement that the temple would be destroyed completely
 - (A) Jesus the answered these questions from His disciples
 - (1) "Tell us, when will these things be? ..."
 - (2) "Tell us, ... what *will be* the sign of Your coming? ..."
 - (3) "Tell us, ... what *will be* the sign ... of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3 NAS)
 - (4) You can ponder if that is two or three questions
 - (B) and Jesus warned them not to be misled, "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many." (Matthew 24:5 NAS) and
 - (C) "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There *He is*,' do not believe *him*. "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." (Matthew 24:23-24 NAS)
 - (D) it is these false Christs that are anti-Christ, substitutes
- c. many think Paul referred to this when he taught
 - (A) in Acts 20:30, "and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (NAS) and
 - (B) "Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction," (2 Thessalonians 2:3 NAS)
 - (C) in any event, this man of lawlessness is anti-Christian in his message and nature; he is exposed to be such as a preliminary to the return of Jesus Christ

4. so now, John says, we know that we are at the end of the age, we are in the last hour, (and that Christ may come at any instant) because already many anti-Christ's have come
 - a. their roots are found in the church herself but their source is Satan, that old serpent, who deceives the whole world
 - (A) such men will speak all the right words
 - (B) they will pronounce correctly our Shibboleths
 - (C) but what they say and what they mean differ vastly
 - (D) there are false teachers today who, for example, agree that 'justification is by faith,' but when you examine what they mean by faith it means adherence to the dogma that their 'church' teaches and keeping the practices that are imposed by their 'church'
 - b. their nature – do not be deceived by these
 - (A) they are wolves in sheep's clothing, even as Jesus warned His disciples in Matthew 7:15
 - (B) they are false, they are deceivers
 - (C) and they may do marvellous works – do not be fooled because they have many 'converts' and may claim great miracles – rather, examine
 - c. their message
 - (A) verse 22: ["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."](#) (NAS)
 - (B) in chapter 4, they are to be identified because they deny the incarnation: that God the Son has entered the world; an entrance whose purpose was to save man; we will examine that further when, Lord willing, we reach those verses in our study of this epistle
 - (C) But, every false religion, every questionable sect, every anti-Christian message, can be identified by this test: what does it teach about Jesus and the cross?
 - (1) if it teaches Jesus to be just another man
 - (2) if it teaches that Jesus plus something saves
 - (3) this is the anti-Christian message; beware of it!
 - (4) then it is false and an abomination before God
 - d. but, John assures us, with these anti-Christ's prowling, with these deceivers lurking to trick us ...

D. Our Alarm System Is On

1. "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth." (1 John 2:20-21 NAS)
 - a. we are going to hear more concerning this anointing in our next message on this book which will be after Easter
 - b. the NASB, NIV and other modern translations are correct rather than the AV which says "and ye know all things."
 - (A) there is nothing worse than a Christian know-it-all
 - (B) Christians do not know all things
 - (C) Paul testifies that 'now I know in part' (1 Cor 13:12)
 - (D) no; this verse says that all Christians know, every Christian experiences, anointing from the Holy One, not just a select group, but every child of God
 - c. that anointing is the Holy Spirit; ... listen:
 - d. Titus 3:5–6 applies to all Christians: "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," (Titus 3:5-6 NAS)
 - e. The Holy Spirit is sent from the Father, the Holy One, by the Son: "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me" (John 15:26 NAS)
 - f. the Holy Spirit is our alarm system, the epitome of truth who by His light will disclose false teaching ...
2. He is a Guide to truth – "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." (John 16:13 NAS) – this, too, we shall talk about in a few weeks, Lord willing
3. The Holy Spirit is an abiding Presence
 - a. there is an home security firm, whose advertisements you have probably heard, that emphasize that they are full voice contact in the event of any emergency; their line of communication cannot be cut; they are always there if a problems should arise

b. Jesus promised this in John 14:16–17, “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.” (NAS)

4. John assures us, then, that in the midst of the attacks of the anti-Christ, that just as God had set a hedge about Job, so He has placed His Holy Spirit to dwell in every Christian to turn them from false teaching and keep them in the truth.

E. Conclusion: Do You Know Where Your Children Are?

1. John concludes this passage with these words, “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.” (1 John 2:23 NAS)
2. these last words are absolute black and white
 - a. No Son? No Father!
 - b. where do you stand in relation to that demarcation line?
3. if you are a believer, having the Son and the Father
 - a. then you have a responsibility for spiritual children
 - b. John carries that responsibility out in this letter, speaking to his spiritual children – those having the Holy Spirit and knowing the truth – proclaiming the message of truth in order that the anti-Christian message may be recognized
 - c. for in the midst of the anti-Christian message of the world, we have a message to tell to the people of planet earth

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. “Attack of the Killer Rabbits” – Kerux illustrations #20976
3. Quoted by Dr David Smith in Expositor's Greek Testament, *in loc.*
4. “The Sands of Time Are Sinking” by Anne Ross Cousin (1824-1906)