

**The Antichrist is Coming**  
**(1 John 2:18-27)**  
Expository Lessons from the First Letter of John

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**I. Background**

- a. John has made the following points thus far in his letter:
  - i. Christians must admit and confess their sins.
  - ii. We only know Jesus if we keep his commandments.
  - iii. We ought to walk as He walked.
  - iv. (Covered in the previous lesson)
    1. We must not love the world or anything in it.
    2. This restates a strong theme we find throughout the teaching of Jesus and the apostolic writers: the dangers of wealth and living for pleasure.

**II. The Text for This Lesson**

- a. Read **1 John 2:18-27**.
- b. Clearly John is addressing in this passage some kind of specific false teaching that is spreading in the church. From the text, we have very limited information regarding what that specific false teaching is. There is some kind of deceptive teaching that they are facing.
- c. John mentions the Antichrist and *antichrists*, in connection with the problems the churches are facing. If we want to fully understand what he is saying here, we need to understand more about the Antichrist and antichrists that he is referring to.
- d. There are five places in Scripture that mention “the antichrist” or “antichrists”. Three are in this passage. The first verse we just read contains the first two places in Scripture where we find this term.
  - i. “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.” (**1 John 2:18**, NKJV)

- e. From this we learn that there is “the Antichrist” who *is coming*; however, it also says that “many antichrists” *had already come*.
  - i. I noticed that John *is reminding them* of something they *already were aware of*, that the Antichrist was coming.
- f. **Question:** *How did they know* that the Antichrist was coming? Jesus did not use the term “Antichrist”; neither did Paul or Peter in their writings. In the entire Bible, we only find this term used in two epistles: **1 John** and **2 John**.
- g. **Question:** Was “the Antichrist” described elsewhere in Scripture, but using different words or expressions to describe him?
  - i. The next place where antichrist is mentioned is within this text: “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.” (**1 John 2:22**, NKJV)
  - ii. The fourth place we find “Antichrist” or “antichrists” mentioned is in **chapter 4** of this letter. Read **1 John 4:1-3**.
    - 1. This passage speaks of false prophets who are led by spirits that *do not confess* that *Jesus Christ has come in the flesh*.
    - 2. This is *the spirit of* the Antichrist.
    - 3. **Question:** What was the problem going on at this time, that John is addressing in this passage? What were the heretical teachings that these false prophets were spreading?

### III. Early Christian Insights into the Problems John is Addressing

- a. The value of considering early Christian insights.
  - i. I am often asked the question, “Why do we need to consider the early Christian writers at all?”
  - ii. First, I want to make it absolutely clear that I hold the Scriptures as the only inerrant standard we have, the Spirit-inspired word of God. The early Christian writers who came after the New Testament writers *were not* inspired by the Holy Spirit.
    - 1. The early Christian writings that came after the time of the apostles were not inspired by the Holy Spirit. The opinions they express can be in error.

2. Wherever an early Christian writer (or multiple writers) says something that contradicts the Word of God, we need to *follow what it says in the Bible*, not the opinions expressed by other early Christians.
- iii. There are many reasons for considering the perspective of the early Christians. These include:
1. They spoke ancient (Koine) Greek, the language that the New Testament was written in. Therefore, they are in a more advantageous position to understand what the New Testament writers meant.
  2. They were not tainted by the perspectives of theologians and religious leaders (whether Protestant, Roman Catholic or other) who lived centuries later, who introduced things that were not part of the original faith.
  3. The early Christian writers were more inclined than most modern Christians to take the words of Jesus and the apostles seriously, rather than to explain away hard or counter-cultural teachings.
  4. I have found that early Christian writers often provide insights and understandings that are *more harmonious with all the Scriptures* on a given subject, compared to modern Christian teachers and commentaries.
    - a. Often, later Christian writers and teachers habitually rely on a few verses to support their points, while ignoring or explaining away others passages that contradict what they are trying to teach.
  5. In some cases, the earliest writers personally knew the apostles, or else were taught by men who personally knew the apostles. Therefore, we can get the perspective of men who were only one or two links removed from the apostles themselves.
- iv. Imagine you were attending a seminar on the **Book of Revelation** (where there are many competing theories regarding how to properly interpret the text). Of course, John was the author of that book.
1. Further imagine that the classes are all running at the same time, in parallel; therefore, you need to choose which one (of several) you will attend.
  2. You look at the conference program and find that there is an all-star lineup with many famous teachers, including some of the best-known, most respected Bible teachers from over the centuries. Class sessions are being taught by:

- a. Famous Catholic theologians like Thomas Aquinas, Jerome and Augustine;
  - b. Famous Protestant teachers like Luther and Calvin;
  - c. Writers of widely-read Bible commentaries, like Matthew Henry and D. A. Carson;
  - d. Noted modern writers like N. T. Wright; and even
  - e. Tim Mackie, narrator of the popular *Bible Project*.
  - f. However, there is one more class being offered at the same time as all the others. This one is being taught by someone whose name you never heard of. He doesn't speak English, only Koine Greek, so he will be giving his talk using a translator. This man lived in the first century in Asia Minor and was personally taught by the apostle John.
3. If you wanted to know the real meaning of the **Book of Revelation**, which class would you want to attend?
    - a. I know which session I would attend, even if I had to stand up way in the back of the room!
    - b. *This is the same reason* I am interested to hear from men who personally knew the apostolic writers, or who were taught by men who knew them personally.
- b. In the case of the text we are considering here, early Christian writer Irenaeus gives background on the specific problems John was addressing.
    - i. Why the insights of Irenaeus are particularly relevant in this case:
      1. Irenaeus (c. 130-200 AD) bishop of the church in Lyons (in modern-day France) grew up in the East, where he had been taught by Polycarp.
      2. Polycarp (c. 69-156 AD) bishop of the church in Smyrna, had been a personal disciple of the apostle John.
      3. Therefore, Irenaeus was only one link removed from a direct connection with the apostle John.
    - ii. Irenaeus explains that *the apostle John, in writing his gospel, clearly recorded the passion and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ*: that he was physically crucified and bodily resurrected. (For example, consider the account in **John 20:24-29** of "doubting Thomas" being challenged by Jesus to place his fingers in the nail holes in Jesus' hands and place his hand in Jesus' side

where the spear had pierced Him.) After reminding his readers of that foundation laid by John in his gospel Irenaeus says regarding John:

1. "...foreseeing these blasphemous systems which divide the Lord, as far as lies in their power, saying that He was formed of two different substances.
  2. "For this reason also he has thus testified to us in his epistle (*from 1 John 2:18-22*): 'Little children, it is the last time; and as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, now have many antichrists appeared; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but [they departed], that they might be made manifest that they are not of us. You know therefore, that every lie is from without, and is not of the truth. Who is a liar, but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist.'
  3. "But inasmuch as all those before mentioned, although they certainly do with their tongue confess one Jesus Christ, make fools of themselves, thinking one thing and saying another; for their hypotheses vary, as I have already shown, alleging, [as they do,] that one Being suffered and was born, and that this was Jesus; but that there was another who descended upon Him, and that this was Christ, who also ascended again..."
  4. (Source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* book 3, chapter 16; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 442)
- iii. The problem John was addressing here, according to Irenaeus:
1. This is one form of Gnosticism, of which there were many forms.
    - a. This was a significant problem in the early church. Gnostics generally held that the flesh is corrupt; only the spirit can be saved.
    - b. Therefore, they tended to reject the idea that the Son of God could have become flesh, could have suffered in the flesh and been bodily resurrected.
  2. Some believers, although expressing faith in "Jesus Christ" held that "Jesus" was one being (the man born of Mary, who suffered in the flesh). However, they held that "Christ" was a distinctly different being. Some held that Christ descended upon the man Jesus; and ascended again.
    - a. Many forms of gnostic-type thinking have continued into our own day.

- b. However, I only recall running into one person (over the past 40 years) who believed this particular heretical position, that the Christ was distinct from Jesus (the man); and that the Christ entered Jesus at His baptism.
- 3. Therefore, John was addressing this heresy when he wrote:
  - a. “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist...” (1 John 2:22); and
  - b. “every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God... this is the spirit of the Antichrist...” (1 John 4:3).

#### IV. Where Else in Scripture Does it Speak of the Antichrist?

- a. Recall that John said, “Little children...as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming...” (1 John 2:18, NKJV)
- b. **Question:** How did they know that the Antichrist was coming?
  - i. Let us consider what else Irenaeus said regarding the Antichrist, how this ties together with the other Scriptures.
  - c. Irenaeus wrote (in *Against Heresies* book 5, chapters 25-26; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, pp. 553-554) that the Antichrist was referred to (by different words) in several places throughout Scripture. Some of the examples Irenaeus points to:
    - i. By Paul in **2 Thessalonians**. (Read **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**.)
      - 1. Here Paul refers to the Antichrist as “the man of sin” or “the man of lawlessness”.
      - 2. This man (the Antichrist) will be revealed before Christ’s return.
      - 3. He (the Antichrist) will exalt himself above all; and will sit as God in the temple of God.
      - 4. This lawless one will come with signs, wonders and power; all from Satan.
      - 5. Many (who do not love the truth and who take pleasure in unrighteousness) will be deceived by this one.
        - a. The hearts of men will be tested and sifted.
    - ii. By Jesus in **John 5:43**.

1. "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; *if another comes in his own name*, him you will receive." (**John 5:43**, NKJV)
  2. Irenaeus wrote that Jesus referred to the Antichrist as "the other", because he was alienated from the Lord.
- iii. By Jesus in **Matthew 24**.
1. "Therefore, when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." (**Matthew 24:15-16**, NKJV)
  2. "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore, if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together." (**Matthew 24:23-28**, NKJV)
- iv. By the prophet Daniel, in a few places.
1. The arrogant horn coming out of the fourth beast, in **Daniel 7**.
    - a. Read **Daniel 7**.
    - b. This is a terrifying vision, featuring four beasts which represent four kingdoms that will arise in succession (each to follow the one preceding it).
    - c. The fourth beast, representing the fourth kingdom, has ten horns which represent ten kings. One horn rises up to displace three others.
      - i. Irenaeus explained that the fourth kingdom refers to the *Roman Empire*.
        1. He also sees the four kingdoms prophecy in **Daniel 7** related to the prophecy about the four-part statue in **Daniel 2**. (Source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* book chapter 26; found in ANF vol. 1, p. 554-555)
      - ii. Hippolytus, an elder of the church in Rome, writing c. 200 AD, linked the **Daniel 2** and **Daniel 7** prophecies in a similar way. He said that in both visions:

1. First kingdom = Babylonians
  2. Second kingdom = Persians
  3. Third kingdom = Greeks
  4. Fourth kingdom = Romans
  5. (Source: Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, chapters 19-28; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 5, pp. 208-209)
- d. This one arrogant horn will persecute the saints and will have authority for a limited time.
  - e. God will judge the horn and destroy its rule. The fourth beast will be destroyed; then the Son of Man comes to receive an everlasting kingdom. The saints are to possess this kingdom.
  - f. Irenaeus says this one arrogant horn that rises up during the fourth kingdom to wage war against the saints, who then will be destroyed by God, is the Antichrist.
2. In the prophecy of the 70 Weeks, the “abomination of desolation” set up in the temple, in **Daniel 9**.
    - a. Read **Daniel 9:20-27**.
      - i. This prophecy was given “in the first year of Darius” (**Daniel 9:1-3**). Therefore, it would have been given c. 538 BC, soon after the Persians conquered Babylon.
    - b. The succession of events that will happen, according to this vision, *in the order in which they are to occur*:
      - i. The call will be issued for Jerusalem to be rebuilt.
        1. Cyrus issued the decree to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (**Ezra 1:1-4**), in 536 BC
      - ii. Christ (the Anointed One), the Prince will come.
      - iii. Christ shall be put to death.
        1. Crucifixion of Jesus was c. 33 AD.
      - iv. The prince who is coming will destroy the city and sanctuary.
        1. The Romans under Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.



- v. Sacrifices will be taken away.
  - 1. No more Jewish animal sacrifices at the temple, after destruction of the temple in 70 AD.
- vi. “Abomination of desolation” will be set up in the temple.
  - 1. (This has not yet happened.)
  - 2. This is what Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 24** and **Mark 13**.
  - 3. “Therefore, when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),” (**Matthew 24:15**, NKJV)
- c. Then finally, the end of the desolation will come.
- v. By John, in the (first) beast of **Revelation 13**.
  - 1. Read **Revelation 13**.
    - a. The dragon gives this (first) beast his power, his throne and great authority.
      - i. The dragon in this vision is Satan.
      - ii. “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (**Revelation 12:9**, NKJV)
        - 1. Satan deceives the whole world.
        - 2. He has been cast to earth, and his angels with him; and he will have the beast (the Antichrist) doing his work later.
    - b. Satan and the Antichrist are not the same thing. The Antichrist is a man who will be given power and authority by Satan.
    - c. The “whole world” will follow the beast; they will worship the dragon (Satan) and the beast (the Antichrist); all *except the saints*, who will face great persecution.
      - i. The saints are encouraged to persevere through this extreme trial.

- d. A second beast is described, starting in **Revelation 13:11**. This one performs great signs and points people to worship the image of the beast.
  - i. This beast has “two horns like a lamb”, but speaks like a dragon (in other words, may look like a lamb on the outside, but is a wicked liar inside).
  - ii. Irenaeus describes this second beast as a false prophet, an armor-bearer for the Antichrist. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* book 5, chapter 28; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 557)
- e. The first beast (the Antichrist) has a deadly wound; but is healed.
  - i. This is like an imitation of Jesus, who was crucified and resurrected.
- f. Everyone is forced to receive the “mark of the beast” on their right hand or forehead. No one can buy or sell anything without this.
  - i. This appears to be a system of absolute control by the governing powers.
  - ii. Perhaps the high-tech capabilities developed in recent decades could be used to support a scenario like this.
    - 1. For example: universal camera surveillance, facial recognition technology, social credit systems, micro-chip implants, push for a cashless society, centralized world government, etc.
    - 2. Who knows?
- g. “He who has understanding” is told that the number of the beast is the number of a man: 666.
  - i. There have been *all kinds of* theories circulating among Christians today, regarding what this “666” might refer to. However, early Christian writers had a very interesting (and logical) understanding what this meant, which we will discuss here.
  - ii. In most of the world there is a completely different script for the *letters of the alphabet* (for us: a, b, c...), versus *numbers* (in Arabic script: 1, 2, 3, etc.).
  - iii. However, in ancient Greek they reused symbols from their alphabet to express numbers as well.

1. For example, “alpha” (*A* or  $\alpha$ ) was also used to refer to the number “one”.
  2. Likewise, “beta” (*B* or  $\beta$ ), the second letter of the Greek alphabet, was also used to refer to the number “two”.
  3. Therefore, in a Greek Old Testament, **Psalms 1** and **2** are designated “**A**” and “**B**”
- iv. Irenaeus gives an interesting explanation regarding significance of the number “666”. He said:
1. Noah lived for 600 years until the Flood, a time of unparalleled corruption on the earth.
  2. The golden image in **Daniel 3** that the three refused to bow down to was 60 cubits x 6 cubits.
  3. Therefore, according to Irenaeus, the significance of the number “666” was that it embodied the summation of all the evil done by mankind over the ages.
  4. (I don’t know if this explanation provided by Irenaeus is correct. However, I found it interesting and wanted to share it with you here, for your consideration.)
- v. Irenaeus and other early Christian writers understood “the number of his name” as related to the fact that in Greek, all letters also have numeric value (their alphabet doubles as a numbering system). Therefore, every name written in Greek also represents a number (the sum of the numeric value of each letter). For example:
1.  $\alpha = 1$
  2.  $\beta = 2$
  3.  $\gamma = 3$
  4.  $\iota = 10$
  5.  $\tau = 300$
- vi. Irenaeus explained that certain Greek names like *Euanthus* and *Teitan* have a numeric value of 666. He also noted:

1. "But he indicates the number of the name now, that when this man comes we may avoid him, being aware who he is: the name, however, is suppressed, because it is not worthy of being proclaimed by the Holy Spirit. For if it had been declared by Him, he (Antichrist) might perhaps continue for a long period. But now as 'he was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the abyss, and goes into perdition,' as one who has no existence; so neither has his name been declared, for the name of that which does not exist is not proclaimed.
  2. "But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that 'many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'"
  3. (Source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* book 5, chapter 30; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, pp. 559-560)
2. The ultimate fate of the beast (the Antichrist) and his false prophet is revealed in **Revelation 19**.
    - a. Read **Revelation 19:11-21**.
    - b. In the great final battle, Jesus leads the armies of God, riding on a white horse. The sword coming out of His mouth slays the enemies of God.
    - c. We can be confident that Jesus will triumph in the end. The beast, his false prophet and all those with him will be destroyed and cast into the burning fire.
  3. **Conclusion:** Things periodically have turned better or worse for Christians regarding persecution, in cycles. Initially Christians faced heavier persecution in the West (under the Roman Empire) compared to those in the East (under the Parthian empire). However after Constantine things changed, and it was Christians in the East who then faced greater persecution. However, it appears that in the last days it will be very bad for Christians *everywhere*.

- a. We should expect persecution regardless of where we live, and may we be refined by it. We must persevere through whatever comes, that we may find our names written in the Book of Life (**Revelation 21:7, 22:19**).
- b. Irenaeus wrote about the persecution we must be prepared to face:
  - i. “And therefore throughout all time, man, having been molded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit, is made after the image and likeness of God: the chaff, indeed, which is the apostasy, being cast away; but the wheat, that is, those who bring forth fruit to God in faith, being gathered into the barn. (**Matthew 3:12, Luke 3:17**)
  - ii. “And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire [for purification], they may be fitted for the royal banquet.
  - iii. “As a certain man of ours said, when he was condemned to the wild beasts because of his testimony with respect to God: ‘I am the wheat of Christ, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God.’”
  - iv. (Source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* book 5, chapter 28; in ANF vol. 1, p. 557).
- d. Another early Christian writer, Hippolytus, an elder in the church in Rome, writing c. 200 AD in a work entitled *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* (ANF vol. 5), provides further explanation regarding the Antichrist.
  - i. Hippolytus links the Antichrist to first part of the **Ezekiel 28** prophecy about King of Tyre (**Ezekiel 28:1-10**).
  - ii. He also says there is a prophecy about the Antichrist in **Genesis 49**, when Jacob is blessing his twelve sons.
    - 1. While the famous blessing goes to Judah (**Genesis 49:8-12**), a great curse falls upon Dan. In **Genesis 49:16-18** it speaks of Dan as being a serpent biting the heel of a horse.
    - 2. Hippolytus ties this “biting the heel” reference to Dan in **Genesis 49:17** back to the famous curse upon Satan from **Genesis 3:15**.
      - a. There it said that the *offspring or seed of* the serpent (serpent = Satan) would strike the heel of the *seed of* the woman Eve.

- b. The seed (offspring) of Satan is the Antichrist.
  - c. The seed of the woman is Christ (son born of a virgin in fulfillment of **Isaiah 7:14**; the one *from the woman* who would bring Satan's defeat as foretold in **Genesis 3:15**).
  - d. Therefore the "offspring of Satan" refers to the Antichrist, who early Christians believed would be a Jewish man *descended from the tribe of Dan* based on **Genesis 49:17**.
- iii. The Antichrist was seen as some kind of counterfeit or false copy of Christ.
1. In English, the prefix or word "anti" generally is understood to mean "against" or "opposed to". For example, in the question, "Are you *pro* or *anti* [something]?" (Meaning, "Are you *for* it or *against* it?")
  2. However, in Greek the prefix "anti" can mean either "*instead of*" or "*against, opposed to*".
  3. With this broader of the Greek word "anti" in mind, early Christians like Hippolytus understood the term "Antichrist" as meaning not only that this being would be *opposed to* Christ, but also *instead of* Christ. In other words, he would try to imitate Christ; he would try to fool people by being a *counterfeit Christ*. Consider what Hippolytus wrote, in that regard:
    - a. "Now, as our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also God, was prophesied of under the figure of a lion, on account of His royalty and glory, in the same way have the Scriptures also aforesaid spoken of Antichrist as a lion, on account of his tyranny and violence. For the deceiver seeks to liken himself in all things to the Son of God.
    - b. "Christ is a lion, so Antichrist is also a lion; Christ is a king, so Antichrist is also a king. The Savior was manifested as a lamb; so he too, in like manner, will appear as a lamb, though within he is a wolf. The Savior came into the world in the circumcision [*as a Jew*], and he will come in the same manner.
    - c. "The Lord sent apostles among all the nations, and he in like manner will send false apostles. The Savior gathered together the sheep that were scattered abroad, and he in like manner will bring together a people that is scattered abroad. The Lord gave a seal to those who believed on Him, and he will give one in like manner. The Savior appeared in the form of man, and he too will come in the form of a man. The Savior raised up and showed His holy flesh like a temple, and he will raise a temple of stone in Jerusalem."

d. (Source: Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 5, p. 206).

## V. What About John's Statement, "Many Antichrists Have Come"?

- a. "Little children... you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come..." (**1 John 2:18**, NKJV)
- b. There is one Antichrist who will come; yet there are also many antichrists who have come.
  - i. Just as there is one Son of God, yet there are also *many sons of God*.
    1. "For *you are all sons of God* through faith in Christ Jesus." (**Galatians 3:26**, NKJV)
  - ii. The Antichrist is the offspring of Satan; however Satan also has many other "sons".
    1. "*(Jesus said) 'You do the deeds of your father.'* Then they said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.' Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of *your father* you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." (**John 8:41-44**, NKJV)
    2. Satan is the original liar, who creates counterfeit religion based on lies.
    3. Satan has many "sons" who are just like their "father". They hate the truth because they are just as their "father" Satan, who is a liar and the father of lies.
    4. The great separator (and our greatest weapon) is the truth.
    5. Those who follow the Antichrist refuse to love the truth (as Paul said in **2 Thessalonians 2:10**). We must love the truth and follow it, *no matter what*.

## VI. Whoever Denies the Son

- a. John said, does not have the Father, either.

- i. “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” (**1 John 2:23**, NKJV)
- ii. There is no way that someone can have the Father unless they also acknowledge the Son. Those who reject Jesus as the Son of God cannot have the Father, either.
- iii. The fact that we have will not have God, the Father unless we have Jesus Christ, the Son is clearly stated in other New Testament passages. For example:
  1. “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through Me.*” (**John 14:6**, NKJV)
  2. “...by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone’ (**Psalm 118:22**). Nor is there salvation in any other, for *there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*” (**Acts 4:10–12**, NKJV)
- b. Recall the unusual requirements for clean vs. unclean animals that we discussed in a recent lesson, Lessons from the Animals. In **Leviticus 11** it said that Jews could only eat “clean” animals, and then defined clean animals as those that *BOTH* chewed the cud *AND* had split hooves.
  - i. Irenaeus (130-200 AD), bishop of the church in Lyons, located in modern-day France, commented on the significance of these two requirements as foreshadowing important things for us today.
    1. “Now the law has figuratively predicted all these, delineating man by the [various] animals: whatsoever of these, says [the Scripture], have a double hoof and ruminates, it proclaims as clean; but whatsoever of them do not possess one or other of these [properties], it sets aside by themselves as unclean. Who then are the clean? Those who make their way by faith steadily towards the Father and the Son; for this is denoted by the steadiness of those which divide the hoof; and they meditate day and night upon the words of God, that they may be adorned with good works: for this is the meaning of the ruminants.
    2. “The unclean, however, are those which do neither divide the hoof nor ruminates; that is, those persons who have neither faith in God, nor do meditate on His words: and such is the abomination of the Gentiles.
    3. “But as to those animals which do indeed chew the cud, but have not the double hoof, and are themselves unclean, we have in them a figurative



description of the Jews, who certainly have the words of God in their mouth, but who do not fix their rooted steadfastness in the Father and in the Son; wherefore they are an unstable generation. For those animals which have the hoof all in one piece easily slip; but those which have it divided are more sure-footed, their cleft hoofs succeeding each other as they advance, and the one hoof supporting the other.

4. "In like manner, too, those are unclean which have the double hoof but do not ruminate: this is plainly an indication of all heretics, and of those who do not meditate on the words of God, neither are adorned with works of righteousness; to whom also the Lord says, 'Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say to you?' For men of this stamp do indeed say that they believe in the Father and the Son, but they never meditate as they should upon the things of God, neither are they adorned with works of righteousness; but, as I have already observed, they have adopted the lives of swine and of dogs, giving themselves over to filthiness, to gluttony, and recklessness of all sorts. Justly, therefore, did the apostle call all such 'carnal' and 'animal,' [all those, namely], who through their own unbelief and luxury do not receive the Divine Spirit, and in their various phases cast out from themselves the life-giving Word, and walk stupidly after their own lusts: the prophets, too, spake of them as beasts of burden and wild beasts; custom likewise has viewed them in the light of cattle and irrational creatures; and the law has pronounced them unclean."
  - a. (Source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 5, chapter 8; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 534)
5. The points Irenaeus is making here:
  - a. Those who eat only grass and ruminate (chew it over and over) represent those who feed on the pure word of God and meditate on it throughout the day.
    - i. In contrast to pigs, unclean animals that eat anything, including garbage.
  - b. Those who have split hooves represent those who are more sure-footed, relying on both the Father and the Son.
    - i. In contrast to the Jews who reject Christ and only believe in the Father.
    - ii. (The same would apply to Muslims today as well, since they believe in the Father but reject Jesus as being the Son of God.)

- c. The Lord certainly wants us to love and reach out to all non-Christians (including Muslims and Jews). However, perhaps over-reacting to intolerance in the past, some have gone to the other extreme in accepting other non-Christian faiths that accept one God as being alternate paths to the Father.
- i. A recent and rather disturbing example of this trend is a religious complex being built on an island in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. This project is an initiative of the “Higher Committee to Implement the Document on Human Fraternity” which was signed by Pope Francis and a top Sunni Muslim cleric in February 2019.
  - ii. The Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, signed by Pope Francis, contains the statement:
    1. “The pluralism and the diversity of religions, color, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings.” (Language here taken directly from the document on the Vatican website)
    2. *Note: The above statement is blatantly contradicted by Scripture; and the pope has been called out by knowledgeable Catholics for signing off on a false statement like this with a top Muslim leader.*
  - iii. Top representatives of the Roman Catholic, Jewish and Muslim faiths are collaborating to build a church, mosque and synagogue on one site. The three houses of worship are collectively to be known as “The Abrahamic Family House”. A world-famous architect has been commissioned to design the complex, and it is scheduled to be completed in 2022.
  - iv. Some prominent Catholics have come forward to criticize Pope Francis for signing on to this initiative, accusing him of syncretism (attempting to blend the different faiths into one). One of the pope’s spokesmen, Cardinal-elect Ayuso, responded to the criticism: “This will not become a melting pot but a *rich mixed salad!*”
    1. However, there is no way to mix the Christian faith with Islam or Judaism. Let us never forget what John has told us:
      - a. “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father, either.” (1 John 2:23, NKJV)
  - v. (Details on the above story from: LifeSite News website article, *Vatican Gives Nod to ‘Abrahamic Family House’ that Equates Christianity, Judaism and Islam*, September 25, 2019; and Religion News Service website article, *A Church, a Synagogue and a Mosque Planned Together for the Arabian Peninsula*, David Gibson, September 23, 2019)

**VII. For More Information Regarding Early Christian Understanding of the Antichrist**

- a. Article on *Antichrist* in Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, ed. David Bercot
- b. Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 5, pp. 204-219