

OpenTheo

1 John 2:18 - 2:29



1 John - Steve Gregg

In this session, Steve Gregg delves into 1 John 2:18-29 by elucidating the concept of the "last hour," as John refers to it in his letter. Gregg notes that John referred to the end times as "the last hour" and the existence of false Christs and false prophets. These false teachers questioned the divinity of Jesus and thus revealed that they are not true believers. Gregg adds that to identify these false teachers, it is crucial to distinguish between knowledge of God and knowledge about God. Ultimately, John emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ to ward off false teaching and to know the truth.

Transcript

Now, last time we got into 1 John 2 and we got through, I think, verse 17, which means we have the remainder of chapter 2 to look at tonight. So we pick it up at verse 18, of course. And John said, 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. 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 went out that they might be made manifest that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus Christ, excuse me, that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either. He who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you shall also abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us, eternal life.

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that

anyone teach you. But as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

And now little children abide in Him that when He appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. All right, this is the material we're going to be looking at tonight.

One of the most surprising things perhaps we encounter right at the very beginning is that John tells his readers living 2,000 years ago that it was at that time the last hour. The last hour of what? It was not the last hour of the world, and yet he says it is the last hour. And he says we have evidence of it.

He says many antichrists have come whereby we know that it is the last hour. We really need to understand what he means by antichrists and the last hour. We don't know exactly the year of writing of this book.

Traditionally, most scholars seem to feel that it was written perhaps in the last decade of the first century. And so some might think that it was the last hour or the end of the first century. Maybe even some would think that John and his people thought the world might even end at the end of the century.

Hard to say. However, there's also a camp that believes that all of the books of the New Testament were written before A.D. 70, but that John's books were written the last of all, sometime just before A.D. 70. If this is true, then he might be speaking of the Olivet Discourse.

Now the Olivet Discourse is that discourse of Jesus that was found in Matthew 24 and the parallels in Mark 13 and in Luke 21. In that discourse, we know that Jesus walked out of the temple in Jerusalem and was made to observe by one of his disciples how lovely and impressive the stones of the temple were. And Josephus, who was there, a historian, tells us those stones were huge.

I think some of them were like 60 feet long, individual stones, huge stones. I don't know how they moved them in those days, but if you think Stonehenge was an impressive thing, this temple was really impressive because it had huge stones like that and probably hundreds of them, stacked and not just upended like Stonehenge. But in any case, this is an impressive piece of architecture.

And the disciples had just heard Jesus say, Your house is left to you desolate. And he walked out of the temple. He was speaking to the Jews about the temple as their house.

Earlier in his ministry, he said, My father's house is not to be made a den of thieves, but you've made it such. He didn't say quite that, but he was talking about his father's house. He said, Do not make my father's house a house of merchandise.

And in another place, he said, My house is supposed to be a house of prayer, but you've made it a den of thieves. But he had spoken of his father's house as the temple, but now he speaks to the Jews, This is your house. Your house is left to you desolate, he says in Matthew 23.

And he walks out and the disciples point out what a magnificent house it is. An enormous temple made of enormous stones, a very impressive thing. Herod the Great had been working on it for 46 years, putting a lot of money into it.

And it was a magnificent piece of architecture, no question about it. But Jesus said, Do you see all these things? Not one of these stones will be left standing on another that will not be thrown down. Which, of course, did happen when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem 40 years later.

And the disciples came to him, four of them anyway, according to Mark 13, which is the parallel. Peter and James and John and Andrew came to Jesus privately and said, Lord, when will these things be? And what sign will there be that these things are about to take place? And then Jesus began to give what we usually call the Olivet Discourse. It's called that because it was on the Mount of Olives.

So it means the discourse of the Mount of Olives is really what all of it means. So the discourse he gave was in answer to the question of when will the temple be destroyed? What sign will there be that it's about to be destroyed? That's the two questions they asked him. And in his answer, he answered both.

He said, on one hand, this generation will not pass before all these things are fulfilled, which was, in fact, true. That generation did not pass before the temple was destroyed. Barely.

He was right on the money. Forty years from the time he said it, it happened. And then he said, and you want to know what sign there will be that's about to take place? He said in Luke's version in Luke 21, 20, he says, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.

Luke 21, 20. And so he told them when it would be because they asked and what sign there would be because they asked. And he said it would happen in that generation and it would be heralded by the approach of armies surrounding Jerusalem.

And he did say his disciples should flee at that time. Now, John was one of the people in that small number of people to whom Jesus spoke. And that discourse of Jesus is recorded in three of the Gospels.

Now, when Jesus was answering the question about these things, he actually said, among other things. In verse five, Matthew 24, five for many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ and will deceive many. You know, there'll be false Christs.

And he also later, if you read on further through, he mentions there'll be false prophets as well as false Christ. Now, John, in his letter, warns about false prophets in chapter four. He says many false prophets have gone out into the world.

And he says, you've heard that the Antichrist is coming. Now, we need to know what he means by the Antichrist. Many people think they know because there's popular views on it.

But the question is, what did John mean by it? And he says, we there are many Antichrist that have already come. And by this, we know it is the final hour. Jesus had said there'd be false messiahs.

That's Antichrist. And there would be false prophets. And John makes reference to both of them as present at the time he's writing.

And since these things were predicted by Jesus to occur before Jerusalem would fall, my theory is that this was written before that and very near to that time. So that John says it is the final hour. That is the final hour of that generation that Jesus said would not transpire before these things happen.

Now, this is obviously different than what a lot of people think about these subjects. A lot of people, whenever they hear about the last days or whatever, they think it's the last days of the world. And in fact, it's often discussed.

Do you think we're living in the last days? Well, when the Bible uses the term the last days, at least in the New Testament, it never applies them necessarily just to the end of the world. Hebrews chapter 1 begins with these words. God, who at sundry times spoken to our fathers by his servants, the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son.

In other words, the time that Jesus came and spoke to us, the writer of Hebrews says, is these last days. Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 1 that Jesus was foreordained before the foundation of the world but was manifest in the last days to us. In other words, when Jesus came, it was manifest to Peter and his generation.

That, he said, was the last days. On the day of Pentecost, when Peter was preaching about the phenomenon that occurred and was requiring explanation, the speaking in tongues and all that, that was going on, and people said, what's going on here? Are you people drunk? And Peter said, we're not drunk. This is what Joel, the prophet, said would happen.

And he quotes him. In the last days I will pour out my spirit, says the Lord. Well, Peter's saying this is it.

God said in the last days he would do this and he's done it. Notice Peter and John and,

you know, the writer of Hebrews, they believed they were living in the last days. Now, they were either wrong or they were right.

If they were wrong, then they were all consistently wrong because all of them said it. Even James said it, by the way. It says in James chapter 5, verse 3, when he's rebuking the rich men, he says, your gold and silver are corrupted and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire.

You have heaped up treasure in the last days. The rich men of his own time, he said, had heaped up treasure in the last days. Not a very good time to be laying up treasure since these are the last days.

You're not going to be able to take it with you. Why not do something more profitable with it? The point is that James, Peter, John, the writer of Hebrews, whoever that was, all spoke as if they were in the last days and we didn't mention Paul. Paul also did so.

Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 11. Paul catalogs some of the experiences that the Jews who came out of Egypt with Moses went through and after he's listed some of those things, he says in verse 11, and now these all, all these things happened to them as examples and they were written for our admonition on whom the ends of the ages have come. We, that is Paul and his contemporaries, he said the ends of the ages had come upon them.

So we have really, I don't think we have any biblical writers, none who wrote epistles, who didn't say they were living in the end times, the final hour, you know, all that. But what did they mean? Did they think the end of the world was near? Did they think the second coming was going to happen in their lifetime? Lots of people say so and of course this is one reason that some people reject the Bible. They say these guys all were wrong.

How can you believe this is the word of God when they all said it was the last times and look, it was 2,000 years since then. It must not have been the last times or the last days. Now there are two ways that this problem has been resolved by evangelicals who don't believe that these writers are wrong and I don't believe they were.

One is to say the entire period of, from the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ is what they called the last days. It was after all inaugurated after many thousands of years which were not the last days. When the Messiah showed up, the coming of the Messiah was the mark of the inauguration of the last days and those last days simply have continued for 2,000 years.

This is a view that I took initially when I first noticed that all the authors of the New Testament said they were living in the last days. I thought, well, it must be that they were and so are we. It must be the whole time, the whole 2,000 years is the last days.

This is a fairly commonly stated viewpoint among evangelicals that the whole church age

is the last days. Well, that could be. However, John goes further and said it's the final hour.

You know, even the last days seems a little bit understated if we're talking about 2,000 years. It should be the last centuries or the last years at least. The last days, you would think that a 2,000-year period would be designated by something else.

But when you come down to the final hour, that really makes it seem like a small amount. If all of history, let's say, is going to be from Adam to the second coming of Christ, let's say 6,000 years which is the generally calculated period of time from Adam to now. Well, out of 6,000 years, the last 2,000 are the last hour.

Like it's the midnight hour, the last third of the whole period of history. I don't know, it just doesn't sound as likely as something else does to me. And that is that all the disciples were anticipating the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction that the old order would be removed and the new order would stand alone without the old order competing with it.

That old order was in the temple and the priesthood and the sacrificial system. All that which Moses or God through Moses had established for 1,400 years but now was going to be replaced by a better covenant. And the old one had become corrupt anyway, very corrupt.

The priesthood was corrupt, the whole system was corrupted, and Jesus said so. And that's why judgment was going to be coming upon it to remove the old and bring in the new. And that's why the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 8.13 said, when God spoke of a new covenant, he made the first one old or obsolete.

And he said, then that which is obsolete is about ready to vanish away. The writer of Hebrews writing just before the destruction of Jerusalem said, it's about ready to go. The old is obsolete, there's a new that has come, and this is a transition that all the biblical writers anticipated.

After all, it was the temple authorities that were mostly persecuting the Christians up until 70 AD. The Sanhedrin, they stoned the first Christian martyr Stephen. In fact, they condemned Jesus to death and blackmailed Pilate.

Now, the point here is that the fall of Jerusalem was much more a consideration to the first century Christians and something anticipated, Jesus predicted it. He said how long it would be, it'd be in that generation. He gave signs that they would know before it happened.

There'd be false Christ, there'd be false prophets. Peter's telling his readers there are false Christs, many of them have come. False prophets, he says in chapter four verse, what is it, two or three, he says many false prophets have gone out into the world.

So he's basically saying Jesus said this would happen, and we know it's happening now because he said so. So I think it's probable, although one could not be overly dogmatic about this, that John and the other writers were not talking about the last 2,000 years as the last days, but really the very last days, no doubt the last weeks, months, or years before the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction about the judgment upon Jerusalem, which they believed was coming. John doesn't say it's the last hour until the second coming of Christ or the last hour of world history.

It is obviously the last hour of some anticipated event coming, and unless it was the fall of Jerusalem, we cannot fix anything with certainty that happened shortly after his writing it that could be what he was talking about, which makes it seem, at least to many, that he'd have to have been mistaken. I don't believe they were mistaken. I think he's right.

I think he wrote it probably just shortly before Jerusalem fell. And so he says, little children, it is the last hour, and I believe he's correct. I'm going to go with that.

And it says, 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. Now, what does he mean by the Antichrist? Now, I know what the average modern preacher means by the Antichrist. They mean a certain world ruler that they anticipate to rise, probably in Europe, maybe in Rome, to deceive the world, to regard him as perhaps the Messiah.

He's a false Messiah, that he ends up betraying Israel. He ends up persecuting believers in Jesus. He gives everyone a mark, and if they don't take the mark, showing their loyalty to him, they get killed, and so forth.

This is a scenario that many people believe Revelation teaches will happen in the very end of time, in the last seven years, in what they call the Tribulation Period. And they believe that this period will be dominated by this world dictator, this anti-Christian world dictator, and they call him the Antichrist. Now, one thing I would point out, just as a matter of fact, is that the word Antichrist is not used in any passage in the Bible about the end times.

If by the end times we mean the time nearest to the second coming of Jesus. The word Antichrist just doesn't appear in the book of Revelation. It doesn't appear in 2 Thessalonians.

It doesn't appear in Daniel. These are books that many people derive their end times viewpoint from. The word Antichrist isn't there.

In fact, the word Antichrist is found only in 1 John and 2 John. What he says in 2 John is just the same as what he says in 1 John, because in 2 John verse 7 he says, For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the

flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist.

He doesn't say the Antichrist, he says an Antichrist. Anyone who doesn't confess, he says that Jesus is coming in the flesh. And in this chapter, 1 John 2, he says, Anyone who doesn't confess that Jesus is the Christ, whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ, that person is an Antichrist.

He says there are a lot of Antichrists who have come. That's how we know it's the last hour. Now how is John thinking here? Because he starts out by saying, You have heard that the Antichrist is coming.

Okay, so this encourages people to think of there's one Antichrist. The Antichrist. There's one, you know, evil man par excellence who is going to be the quintessential Antichristian guy.

Now, John doesn't tell us even if the Antichrist is a political figure or, you know, he doesn't tell us anything about his career. He just mentions, you guys are expecting the Antichrist to come. So we have to ask, what did they understand the Antichrist to mean? What were they expecting? He says, you have heard that the Antichrist is coming.

Where did they hear that? Which passages in the Bible might have been used to inform that expectation? A lot of people today when they talk about this Antichrist that they describe use Daniel chapter 8, excuse me, Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 11 and 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation chapter 13. None of those passages use the word Antichrist anywhere but they do talk about a bad guy or bad guys. In Daniel chapter 7 there's this character called the Little Horn.

He rises out of the Roman Empire and he speaks blasphemous words and he persecutes the saints. Okay, this Little Horn in this vision grows out of an animal that has ten horns and this is popularly identified as this future Antichrist character. And then Daniel chapter 11 talks about a certain king very nebulously identified or not really identified at all, king of the south, a willful king and it says that he will do some things too but what is said is very vague and it does not say what time period he's talking about.

In my opinion, Daniel in both of those passages is talking about some character that rises out of the Roman Empire in the past and there are identifications that have been made that are credible. In any case, neither the Little Horn nor the willful king in Daniel are identified with an Antichrist at the end of time. Now 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, Paul talks about one that he calls the man of lawlessness.

Not only does he write about the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2 but he says that he had already talked to the Thessalonians about, when he was with them, about this subject. So the man of lawlessness is an entity to be identified somehow. And many people think the man of lawlessness is to be identified as this future political dictator.

Although Paul doesn't indicate at all that the man of lawlessness has any political career at all. He says that the man of lawlessness will sit in the temple of God and claim to be God. He doesn't indicate any kind of political role that the man of lawlessness has.

And when Paul says the temple of God, that's a term he used in 2 other places. 3 places Paul uses that term. And in the other 2 he clearly says the church is the temple of God.

He says, don't you know that you are the temple of God, that God dwells in you? So Paul's reference to the temple of God is not likely to mean the Jewish temple. In 2 Thessalonians he uses the same term twice before, in 1 and 2 Corinthians, both times identifying the church as the temple of God. So the man of lawlessness is not said to be political but ecclesiastical.

Somebody who sits in the church and makes boasts for himself. So that doesn't sound like the standard view of a future antichrist either. And certainly Paul doesn't use the word antichrist, neither in that passage nor in any of his writings.

Then of course you've got the beast of Revelation. This is probably the most well-known antichrist identification. The book of Revelation does not use the word antichrist of the beast or anywhere else in the Revelation, though it's written by the same author as who wrote this epistle.

In the epistle he speaks of the antichrist, but he doesn't use that term in Revelation. The main bad guy in Revelation is this beast. But is the beast a guy or something else? You are introduced to the beast in Revelation 13 where he sees coming out of the sea a beast which he says has the mouth of a lion, it is like a leopard, it has the feet of a bear, and it has seven heads and ten horns.

Now is this a person or what? Well, it seems clear that this beast in Revelation is a conglomerate or a mixture of the seven beasts in Daniel 7. Because Daniel saw seven beasts come out of the sea, like this one comes out of the sea, but he saw a lion followed by a bear, followed by a leopard, followed by an unidentifiable beast that had ten horns. So Daniel sees a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a ten-horned beast, and this beast that comes out of the sea has the mouth of a lion, the feet of a bear, the body of a leopard, and ten horns, and seven heads to boot. So there is additional information here.

Now when an explanation is given of this beast in Revelation 17, it says the seven heads are two things. A. They are seven hills, seven mountains upon which the harlot sits, and they are seven kings. So the seven heads of the beast are seven kings.

Likewise, the ten horns are said to be ten kings who give their power to the beast. Now here we have an animal that has seven kings' heads and ten kings' horns. These are not, this animal is not an individual person any more than the beasts in Daniel were an individual person.

They were kingdoms. They were political systems. The first was Babylon.

The second was Medo-Persia. The third was Greece. The fourth was Rome.

Virtually all evangelicals agree about that identification of Daniel's beasts. And Revelation's beast is a combination of them all. There is no indication it is an individual man any more than the beasts in Daniel are individual men.

They are kingdoms. And since this one is a beast that has seven kings and ten kings, it is obviously a bunch of kings. It is not one person.

Now I won't, of course at this time, take the time to identify what I think the beast in Revelation is, but suffice it to say there is not any evidence that it is an individual man. And therefore we begin to say, well where do you get this idea of an individual who is called the Antichrist? Revelation doesn't have it. Second Thessalonians doesn't seem to have it.

Daniel doesn't seem to have it. And you have pretty much exhausted all the passages ever used to say it, except for some vague ones. Like where Jesus said, I come in my Father's name and you reject me.

Another will come in his own name. Him you will accept. When I was a dispensationalist, I thought that was a reference to the Antichrist, though it is not at all clear that that is so.

Jesus could be speaking generically. You will accept a man who comes in his own name, but you won't accept me when I come in my Father's name. He is not necessarily making a prediction, just making an observation.

But once in a while you will see an odd verse, you know, thrown into the mix of the Antichrist conglomerate imagery, but none of the passages that are used to speak of this expected individual Antichrist, none of them really in their context have any real clear reference to an individual, nor necessarily to someone coming in the end of time. So this idea that the last three and a half years of the Tribulation and the End Times are going to be dominated by this political figure, well, I'm not against it. To tell you the truth, I wouldn't be surprised.

I wouldn't be surprised if there's some anti-Christian dictator arise. He might even already be on the scene. But the question is, is the Bible predicting that? I mean, lots of things will happen that the Bible said nothing about.

And if the world should someday have one world government under one dictator, who would be surprised? Even if we didn't have a Bible, we could check the present trajectory of politics and geopolitics and say, well, I think that's easy to predict. Probably if we go long enough, it'll go that way. So I'm not denying that we may have to face sometime an

anti-Christian superpower political leader.

The question is, what does the Bible teach on the subject? And the answer is not easy to find because it's hard to find any passage in the Bible that when you exegete it in its context, it really seems to be talking about that. So what did they hear when he said, you have heard that the Antichrist is coming? We think of the Antichrist, when we hear that term, we got all this, what should we say? This Christian, this end times Christian, almost mythology. I don't wanna say mythology to make it sound bad, but basically there's this whole ethos that we've been taught about the end times from popular dispensational teachers.

But is that what John means? Is that what his readers had heard? Had they heard about this kind of a character coming up in the last days? If so, where is it mentioned in scripture? Who told them about it? And when? And was there any record of it? We don't know. But there is more on this in 1 John. If you look over at 1 John 4, it says, Beloved, verse 1, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Now, Matthew 24, 5, Jesus said there will be false prophets and false Christs. By the way, the word anti, Christ, the Greek particle anti, which is the first part of that, it can mean instead of or it can mean against. In the Greek language, anti is used both ways when connected to different words.

Sometimes it means against the thing or sometimes it means instead of the thing, in its place. Now, an anti-Christ, therefore, could be one that is in the place of Christ, a false Christ. And Jesus said there will be false Christs, plural, and false prophets, plural.

John says in 1 John 4, There are many already false prophets have gone out into the world. And of course we saw a moment ago, in 2 John, he said many anti-Christ have gone out into the world. Both statements are made.

But look at this in verse 3. Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God, and this is the spirit of the anti-Christ, which you have heard was coming and now already is in the world. Wait a minute. Which you heard was coming? What had they heard was coming? The anti-Christ, right? Which he says is already now in the world.

That is, whatever they had heard was coming, John said it has come. We could have deduced that already from what he said in chapter 2 when he says it is the final hour. You have heard that the anti-Christ is coming and now there are many anti-Christ, so we know it is the final hour.

In other words, the thing predicted has come. Many anti-Christ. But how is it that many anti-Christ are the anti-Christ? Well, look what he says there in 1 John 4. Every one,

every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ is, it says, the spirit of the anti-Christ.

Now the word spirit in your Bible is in italics. That is because it is not in the Greek text. Something seems to belong there because the way it actually reads literally in the Greek text is this is the, of the, anti-Christ.

A blank. So, translators have put the word spirit in there because it is about every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ. So they say, well that is the spirit of the anti-Christ.

But really John did not say it is the spirit of the anti-Christ. He just said it is the, of the, anti-Christ. What is? All these people around who are denying that Jesus came to the earth, they are the something of the anti-Christ.

Could it be the coming of the anti-Christ? Could it be the fulfillment of the anti-Christ? What is it? Maybe it is even the spirit of the anti-Christ. That is the word that the translators supply because they think it is best. Maybe it is.

But what he is saying is what has come is what you heard was going to come. Well, what they heard was going to come is the anti-Christ. Well, the spirit of the anti-Christ is here and that is what you were looking for.

How do we find or see the spirit of the anti-Christ? It is in the many anti-Christ. The many anti-Christ are so many manifestations of the anti-Christ spirit. It sounds as if John sees the anti-Christ which he uses the definite article in verse, in chapter 4 as he does in chapter 2. The anti-Christ apparently is the spirit of the anti-Christ.

That is what has come. That is what you heard was coming in both places. You heard the anti-Christ.

This is the spirit that you heard was coming. The anti-Christ. So, it sounds kind of to me, although the language is strange, especially the absence of a noun in this particular verse in chapter 4 makes it somewhat speculative what he intended to stick in there.

What he has put in there says what it is they heard was coming it is here now already in the world. And it seems to me likely that since he has just said many false prophets are in the world and Jesus said there will be false prophets and false Christs or anti-Christ. He is saying you heard this was coming.

It is here. This whole spirit of rejection of Christ, of rejection of his Christship, this anti-Christ spirit. You have heard it was coming.

It is here and you can see it in these people who are denying that Jesus is the Christ, who are denying that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. So, while I don't have any real, honestly don't have any preference about the matter since I am easy. I am quite amenable to the suggestion that maybe someday in our lifetime or in our children's or

grandchildren's lifetime the world may be one government under one evil person.

But I am not sure the Bible talks about that particular phenomenon anywhere. And we shouldn't assume that just because the newspapers point us in the direction of such a thing may be materializing that the Bible points us necessarily in that direction. What I am saying is the Bible might not say anything about the subject.

It might happen or it might not happen. The Bible is simply talking about something else in these passages. And it sounds to me like the something else he is talking about is Christ's predictions have been fulfilled.

Because when they asked when will Jerusalem be destroyed? He said, well, let me give you some information here. And in Matthew 24, 5, he said, for many will come in my name saying I am the Christ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars.

They did, by the way. See that you are not troubled. He said, verse 7, nations shall rise against nations and kingdom against kingdom.

That happened. Contemporary historians including Josephus records these things happened. And Josephus did not even know Jesus predicted it.

And it says, well, it says a number of other things here. But verse 11, Matthew 24, 11, it says, then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. So many false Christs, many false prophets.

John says, many false prophets have gone out in the world. He almost uses Jesus' exact prediction and says this has happened. So, I am getting the impression from comparing these scriptures and I am not leaving any out on the subject.

In case you think I am being selective in order to come up with some kind of pre-planned conclusion. I don't have any interest in what the conclusion is. I just want to know what John is talking about.

And I am not leaving anything out that I can think of that I have ever found in scripture about Antichrist. What he is saying is, the Antichrist that you thought is coming is here in the person of many false Christs, many Antichrists. This is the spirit of Antichrist that you heard was coming.

It is here. And he says, of them, the Antichrists, plural, verse 19, chapter 2. We are talking about 1 John 2, 19. 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 went out that they might be made manifest that none of them were of us. Now, this verse is sometimes used to prove that if people backslide, they never were really Christians in

the first place.

I mean, it sounds like it. They went out from us, meaning from our Christian company. They were in it, but they are not now.

They left. And he said, if they had been really of us, they would have stayed. But they went out proving that they never were of us in the first place.

This is an excellent Calvinist proof text because they believe in perseverance of the saints. They say, if you are really saved, you will stay saved. You will persevere.

If you depart from the faith, it only shows you never were really saved. And John's statement, taken in a vacuum, would seem to be a great proof text for that. In fact, Calvinists use this text to make that very point.

Is John using it to make that point? He is not talking about backsliders. He is talking about false teachers. He is talking about people who are denying that Jesus is the Christ.

He is talking about those in the spirit of Antichrist who are teaching false doctrine that Jesus has not come in the flesh. He says, these teachers were in our midst. Fortunately, they left because they never really belonged here.

They never really were of us. That is, maybe John means of us apostles. The reason I say that is John frequently refers to him and his fellow apostles as us.

As he will later say, he that is God hears us. He that is not God does not hear us. These teachers were not one of us.

This is not necessarily a statement about individual Christians, ordinary Christians backsliding and proving they never were Christians, but rather teachers leaving the church because they teach heresy and leaving the church to prove they never really belonged in the teaching body of the church. They were never of the apostles. They were never on the same page with us, he says.

I think, since this is really talking about the false teachers, that it is not really a verse about generic perseverance of Christians, but rather these teachers have not been able to tolerate the church with John in charge because their views were too much different from his, apparently, from the beginning. And so they left, proving that they were never really of us in the first place. But he says, but you have an anointing from the Holy One and you know all things.

Now this statement is expanded on in verse 27. He said, the anointing, in verse 27, which you have received from him abides in you. That means remains in you.

And you do not need that anyone teach you, but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is no lie, and just as it has taught you, you will

abide in him. Now, there's a lot of abiding here in this passage. This is typical of John, who in his gospel talked a lot about abiding in Christ.

We actually recorded Jesus talking about it. The other gospels don't record Jesus' statements about abiding in him, but John does. And now he's repeating what his master had said.

You need to abide in Christ. You need to abide in the things you've heard before. He says that in verse 24.

He says, therefore let that abide in you, which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. There's a lot of abiding reference here.

In fact, there's so much that the King James translators decided there's too many references to the same word, so they used several different English words to translate the same Greek one. For example, verse 24 in the King James version says, let that therefore remain in you, which you heard from the beginning. If that which you've heard from the beginning shall abide in you, or I think abide is the first word, then it says remain, then you shall continue in the Father and the Son.

In a single verse, the same Greek word is translated in three different English words by the King James there in verse 24. They translate abide, remain, and continue. Well, it means all those things.

King James translators sometimes just switch it up so they didn't use the same word over and over again. The new King James wants you to know that it's the same word, so they just use abide, abide, abide all the way through. Now what he says in verse 27 is the anointing which you have received from him abides in you.

This anointing he is referred to in verse 20. You have an anointing from the Holy One and you know all things. Now he doesn't mean you're omniscient.

Nobody knows all things and John wouldn't be suggesting that. He means you know all these things I'm telling you. Everything I'm saying you've heard before.

You don't really need me to tell you this. He says I'm not writing to you, verse 21, because you don't know. You do know.

I'm just reminding you, okay? I'm not, if I had to tell you things you didn't know, I might have to go into this more at length, but you already know what I'm saying, so I'm just reminding you. Now the anointing, the word anointing of course is related to the word Christ because the word Christos, Christ in the Greek, means the anointed one. Anointing is a reference to pouring oil over something.

Anointing with oil was a common practice in the Old Testament in the inauguration of certain people to religious or public office in Israel. The priests initially were anointed with oil. Occasionally a prophet was anointed with oil.

Elisha sent a fellow prophet to go anoint a man to be king, Jehu, and he poured oil over him. The kings of Israel were anointed. Saul was anointed with oil when he became king of Israel.

David was anointed when he became king of Israel. The pouring of oil over the head was a ceremonial declaration that this person had received an office, an anointing, an installation into a position of authority of some kind. And we see that the anointing of oil actually is a figure for the Holy Spirit.

We see that, for example, when David was anointed by Samuel, it says the Holy Spirit left Saul and the Holy Spirit came upon David when he was anointed with oil. In Acts chapter 10, Peter is preaching in the household of Cornelius. He's summarizing the life of Jesus somewhat.

And he says in verse 38, Acts 10, 38, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Now Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. The word anointed means having oil poured over.

So he's basically saying just as kings are anointed with oil, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. The anointing of David with oil represented the Holy Spirit coming upon him also. Now John says you have received an anointing.

He means by that you've received the Holy Spirit. In fact, he says this anointing you've received teaches you of all things. And in that, John is echoing something in his own book, in his own gospel.

In John chapter 16, Jesus was in the upper room with the disciples. And he said, in John 16 verses 12 and 13, Jesus said to his disciples, I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the Spirit, he means the Holy Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth.

Okay? So I can't tell you everything I want you to know right now. You're not ready, but you'll have the Holy Spirit sent to you, and he will guide you. He'll teach you.

He'll take you further than where I've been able to take you, because he'll be with you when you reach the point where you can bear this information. He'll give it to you then. The idea is that Jesus said the Holy Spirit would be given to teach you, to guide you into all truth.

And John says, in 1 John 2.27, that the anointing we have teaches us everything. He's talking about the Holy Spirit. And he says because the Holy Spirit teaches us everything,

we don't need anyone to teach us.

Now, obviously, the Christian Church, including John and his companions, have always featured some people who teach the Church. The Apostles taught the Church right from the very beginning, including John. He taught the Church.

Because we read in Acts 2, when 3,000 people were saved on the day of Pentecost, it says they continued daily in the Apostles' teaching. So the Apostles were teaching them on a daily basis. So why does John, who taught people on a daily basis, say you don't need any man to teach you? Well, I believe John would agree with Paul that the Holy Spirit is in charge of teaching us, but he, in some cases, teaches us through people who have a spiritual gift.

And that is a gift of the Holy Spirit called teaching. Paul mentions the Holy Spirit's gifts, and he mentions teachers as a gift. In Romans 12, he also mentions teachers as one of the gifts at the end of 1 Corinthians 12.

He said, are all Apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers? He's talking about different gifts. So there are people who have a gift of teaching, but insofar as you receive from them, hopefully you're receiving from the Holy Spirit. That's just another avenue through which the Holy Spirit teaches you.

He can teach you with or without teachers. If you don't have a teacher, the Holy Spirit can teach you all you need to know. If you're walking in the Spirit and listening to the Spirit, he will guide you into all truth.

But if there are resources available, let's say good books or good teachers who have a spiritual gift of teaching, well, then the Holy Spirit teaches you through that means. But you're not dependent on teachers, you're dependent on the Holy Spirit. He can teach you through a teacher or without a teacher.

He can teach you through books or without books. It's not for us to decide which way we're going to make him teach us. We can say, well, there's teachers available, but I'm not going to pay attention because I don't need teachers.

I have the Holy Spirit. Well, what if the Holy Spirit says, well, here's some teachers for you? I don't want to listen to them because I want the Holy Spirit to teach me a different way, not through teachers. Well, what if the Holy Spirit's saying he wants to teach you through teachers? In other words, John is not eliminating the spiritual gift of teaching, but he believes that anyone who teaches the church should be, in fact, operating through the spiritual gift, through the Holy Spirit, because it's the Holy Spirit who teaches, whether through a teacher or without one.

The main thing here, though, is it really raises questions about the idea of needing bishops and clergy and people like that to keep you on the right path. We know, for

example, that the Roman Catholics and many Protestants have the attitude that you can't really trust the average Christian to stay walking with Jesus without some kind of ecclesiastical hierarchy handing down proper interpretations and so forth because people just wander off into all kinds of errors. I have a good friend who's a Roman Catholic who calls me on the air frequently from Monterey, Tom, from Monterey, and he's often said this.

He said, you Protestants, he said, you don't have a central teaching authority in your church like we do. And he said, look what's happened. You've got 43,000 denominations and they don't agree with each other.

So that's what happens when you don't have a man telling everybody what to believe. A man like the Pope or like a group of men like the College of Bishops, these people keep the Catholic Church in line. They make sure that the Catholic Church has a uniform set of beliefs.

You get people out from under that and they just go every which direction into craziness. And I will have to admit, some Protestants have gone into some pretty crazy stuff, but frankly, so have some Catholics. It's not as they say, not all Roman Catholics really see things alike.

There's priests who believe there should be married priests and the Pope doesn't think so. There are, you know, there are even some Roman Catholics who think that there should be homosexual clergy and the Pope fortunately doesn't agree with that. But there are different views among Catholics.

They just don't teach them. They can't teach them and stay Catholics and that's just the way things are set up there. The Protestant Church is different in that you can teach pretty much what you want and you get kicked out or you can start another group and, you know, I don't think starting other groups is a good idea.

But I do think that letting people be led by the Spirit if they are true Christians and really possess the Spirit is what is biblical. You don't need some hierarchical group of clerics to think for you, to interpret for you, to teach you, to keep you from going astray. As a matter of fact, that's one of the best ways to go astray because, frankly, the Dark Ages didn't come about until after there was the rise of such a clerical authority.

And if you study Church history, you'll know the Dark Ages were very, very dark largely because of the quality of those authorities. I mean, there was a period that even the Roman Catholic historians refer to as the reign of the harlots, a series of Popes who were absolutely immoral. Well, Popes are people too.

There's television evangelists who aren't Catholic who are immoral. There's religious leaders in every group that are immoral. The thing is, we don't have to follow them in

the Protestant Church.

I don't have to follow Jimmy Swaggart or Jim Baker or, you know, Taggart or any of those people, thankfully. If they end up going the wrong way, that's their problem, not mine. I mean, it's mine in a way because when one member of the body suffers, all suffer.

But in other words, I don't have to go astray with them. And that's a good thing because when you put everyone under one authority, then the quality of the whole body rises or falls with the quality of that person in authority and it's not always a good thing. So, better for the Holy Spirit to lead people into all truth.

And you know what I found? I told my friend Tom this too. He says, you know, Tom, there are a lot of denominations and a lot of opinions, but I don't think God's opposed to people having a lot of opinions. He is opposed to them having denominations.

God is opposed to people dividing over their differences of opinions, but He's not against them having differences of opinions on a number of things that are harmless to disagree about. In fact, it allows for growth, it allows for continual interaction, iron sharpening iron. I can learn something from someone who sees it differently than I can.

They may learn something from me. You know, the more different views out there there are, the more we can interact and depend on one another, not in the sense that we depend on each other to tell us what the truth is, but to see things differently, to consider different aspects. It's a stimulating thing.

You know, I can get together with a Calvinist and a dispensationalist and a, you know, you name it, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Pentecostal, Mennonite, it doesn't matter. They're all different. They see things differently.

And I can have good fellowship with them if they're willing to. That's the problem. The problem is not that people have differences of opinions, it's that the ones who do have differences of opinion too often are not willing to fellowship with people who don't agree with them.

And that's the weakness in the Protestant Church. It's not that they have freedom to think, it's that they, when they don't think alike, they have the immaturity that prevents them from fellowshiping with people they don't agree with. Paul didn't agree with that policy.

Remember in the Church of Rome, he said, some of you, well, you feel freedom to eat anything you want to. Others, you'll only eat vegetables. Some of you keep one day holy, some of you keep every day alive among the Christians.

Differences of opinions about these things. He said, let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind. In other words, it's not that big a deal, is it? Just fellowship, love each

other, accept one another, he says, as God and Christ has accepted you.

You've got people who keep a Sabbath and people who don't keep a Sabbath. That's a pretty big difference to some people. Paul says, nah, the one who keeps the day, he does it to the Lord.

The one who doesn't keep the day to the Lord, he doesn't keep it. Just receive each other as God has received you and Christ. Paul is saying that differences of opinion don't have to divide the church.

It's the immaturity of Christians that divides them, not their differences of opinion. I know that because I've been with mature Christians with lots of different opinions and it doesn't divide me and them. It's not opinions that divide, it's immaturity that divides.

And the Protestant church is divided because of immaturity, not because of liberty. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3, 17, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. There's not some kind of church structure clamped down on everyone.

You have to all think this way. That's how the Jehovah's Witnesses are. You know, they say, we are the true church.

We know it because Jesus prayed that his church would be united. And look at us, we all say the same thing. All Jehovah's Witnesses, we all have the same opinion on every subject.

Yeah, they do that. It's no miracle though, because if you're in the Jehovah's Witnesses and you don't agree, you're out. It's an artificially maintained unity.

It's not miraculous. It's not proof that the Holy Spirit is among them or that they're the true church. They've got a tyranny in that place.

It's a mental tyranny. If you don't agree with the clamped down, authoritative view of the leadership in the organization, you're out. And then that keeps everything trimmed up nice.

Everyone's in unity in there, but everyone's immature. And frankly, they're all in heresy too. Having one authority telling everyone what to think doesn't say you're not going to be in heresy.

But to tell you the truth, if you let everyone truly be led by the Holy Spirit as they understand it, even if some of them are misled, everyone's not going to go into heresy. Someone's going to be saying, hey, wait, that's the wrong direction because I believe the Holy Spirit showed me this. Now, if there are directions that people go that should result in disfellowship.

John said that. These people went out from us. They didn't belong in us.

There's some people who shouldn't be here. But they're the people who deny Christ. They're not the people who have a different view of predestination or the timing of the rapture or the mode of baptism.

Those aren't the things that's supposed to divide Christians. In fact, nothing is supposed to divide Christians from other Christians, but just Christians from non-Christians. And someone who denies that Jesus is the Christ is not a Christian.

He's anti-Christ. That division is supposed to happen. It's good for them to go out.

They don't belong here. But among those who receive Christ, any number of other opinions can be enjoyed, discussed, debated even. Nothing wrong with debate if it's a learning experience for all.

And as long as when it's all over, everyone says, well, I've heard what you have to say. You've heard what I have to say. If we remain unconvinced, then we just have to give each other the liberty where the Spirit of the Lord is, there's liberty.

You don't have to agree with me and I don't have to agree with you. We just have to keep on learning. Just have to keep on loving Jesus and let the Holy Spirit keep leading us into all truth.

Maybe next time we debate it, we'll understand it better. It doesn't matter. If we're judging people by agreement, then of course it's dangerous to let everyone have the freedom to let the Holy Spirit lead them into all truth because they're not all going to see things the same way.

And I was asked this the other day on the air. You know, if the Holy Spirit is supposed to lead us into all truth, and we all have the Holy Spirit, how come we don't all believe the same thing? Well, you only have to think about it for a brief time to realize why that is. The Holy Spirit doesn't just download the whole of all truth into your head when you're baptized.

Like the moment you get saved, suddenly you know everything, you're omniscient. The Holy Spirit leads into all truth through learning, through experience, through revelation, through a process we learn. Here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept, Isaiah said.

That's how we learn. Now the thing is, we know where the Holy Spirit's leading us all to, all truth, but where he's leading us from is not the same in every case because I've got a certain set of prejudices built into me from the time I was a kid, either because of a secular upbringing or because of a religious upbringing in one or another denomination. I've got these impressions that were built into me at an early age.

They're factory installed. They're hard to dislodge sometimes depending on how

teachable I am, how prejudiced I am, where I'm starting, how far my original ideas were from where I need to go. We're all at different stages on the road as the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth and as we're on the way there, we're quite different in some points.

That's okay. We need to, I think, celebrate the journey. If we're following Jesus and he's leading us, and I can easily tell in most cases whether somebody who disagrees with me is still a follower of Jesus if they love one another, that's Jesus of the evidence, well then, of course, I can grant you the liberty to disagree and you'll grant me the liberty and we'll all have a good time and maybe learn something somewhere down the line.

If we don't all agree eventually before we die, we will afterwards. And so God will fix it. God will make it happen eventually, but not by imposing some human authority and say, everyone will agree with what this guy says.

That's what a cult is, isn't it? Isn't that the common denominator of every cult? Is that some guy proclaims himself an apostle or a prophet or the guy who sees everything clearly that everyone else doesn't see and he says, you've got to follow me and agree with me. I've never seen that ever happen if it wasn't a cult. And the Holy Spirit's not a cult.

The Holy Spirit teaches people at his own rate as he wishes and calls upon us to have the fruit of the Spirit which is love in the meantime. As we are still not fully agreed about everything, that will someday happen. Look what Paul said in Ephesians 4. Paul was very adamant that Christians need to be in unity with each other and he said in Ephesians 4, beginning at the very beginning, I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called with all lowliness, that means humility, and gentleness, and longsuffering, that means patience with people, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

And he says why? There's one body, there's one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Now all those things are things that every Christian has in common. Every Christian has the same Father, the same Lord, the same baptism, the same faith, the same Christ, and those are the things that create and maintain the unity of the Spirit.

But he says in verse 13, verse 13, until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man, the word perfect should be translated mature, we as a church need to mature. We need to keep the unity of the Spirit which exists until we arrive at the unity of the faith which does not yet exist. We all have the same Spirit, but we don't have the same beliefs about everything and the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God.

We don't all know the same things. That's out there still ahead of us. Until we reach that,

we need to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of love and so forth.

So Paul and John both indicate that we don't necessarily have to all be brought into conformity immediately of all seeing things the same way, but we do have to recognize the work of the Spirit in leading each person. No person is obligated to believe what another person believes. However, every Christian is obligated to follow Jesus, but that's more of a practical thing than an opinion thing, really.

I mean, do you love your neighbor? That's what Jesus said to do. Not an awful lot of opinions about what love is, at least you shouldn't be among Christians. So John says to his readers, I'm warning you about false teachers, but I'm not really worried that you're going to follow them.

I'm just kind of nervous a little bit, so I'm just kind of reminding you. You have the anointing. You don't need me to tell you this.

You know it already. I'm not writing to you because you don't know it. But I'm writing it because you really do know it.

And you know that no lie is of the truth, he says in verse 21. Now verse 22, he says, who's a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He's Antichrist, who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either.

Whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. The Father and the Son come together. You get one, you get both.

You deny one, you deny both. So he says to them in verse 24, remain in that thing that you were before. Don't think you have to go into some novel, new beliefs about anything.

Let that remain in you or abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you will remain in Jesus, in the Father and in the Son. Jesus said in John 15, abide in me.

And John says, you will abide in him if you stick with what you were taught from the beginning and don't move from there. You will abide in Christ. And he says this is the promise he has promised us, eternal life.

He says these things I've written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But they're not going to succeed because you have that anointing in you. Now verse 28 and 29 will be done here.

And now little children abide in him that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. That's something to contemplate. When he appears, will we have reason to be ashamed before him when he comes? Not if we

remain in him.

Because Jesus said if every branch that remains in me brings forth much fruit, nothing to be ashamed of there. In fact, in the same passage in John 15, Jesus said, in this my Father is glorified that you bring forth much fruit, so shall you be my disciples. I think that's verse 8 of John 15.

My Father is glorified when you bring forth much fruit. And if you abide in me, you will bring forth much fruit. So if you abide in him, you don't have anything to be ashamed of.

You won't have to be lopped off as a fruitless, worthless branch. You will be able to... Your life is producing that fruit that comes from abiding in him and that's what God wants. And we will not be ashamed.

We'll be pleased that he will come to inspect our fruit. Because we will have something to offer him in the way of fruit that's good. And here's what that fruit is in verse 29.

If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him. Being born of God results in you practicing righteousness. Not perfectly, but as a habit.

As a practice. You do the right thing. Living righteously is a practice for those who are born of God.

And if you know God is righteous, if you know Jesus is righteous, then you know that everyone who has that family trait of righteousness in their behavior must be one of his kids. Everyone that practices righteousness is one of his kids, is born of him. So, the fruit that we produce when we abide in him is righteous behavior, righteousness.

We practice righteousness. That's the fruit he wants and if we are doing so, when he comes, we won't be ashamed. And it's coming.

And, apparently that is something that we should bear in mind. Perhaps we should bring it to mind very frequently. I don't know.

When Jesus comes, he's going to judge everyone according to their works, Jesus said. In fact, Peter said that and John said that and Paul said that in various passages. Everyone's going to be assessed by their works.

So, live obediently to Christ. If you're born of God, you'll have that character trait of God. That righteousness will be part of your nature.

Peter said in 1 Peter 1, 2 Peter 1, 4, he said that we have become partakers of the divine nature. Certainly, the divine nature, one of its traits is righteousness. And if you're born of God and have his nature, you will have righteousness.

You'll be practicing righteousness. That's what John says. In chapter 3, he goes on more into what it looks like to practice righteousness.

We will, of course, get into that, but not tonight because of the time. And so, we're going to close with this. And next time we do 1 John, we'll come to chapter 3. Thank you.