

1. **Introduction:** The subject of this lesson is “The Antichrist.” In 1994, Kim Riddlebarger pointed out an interesting truth about Antichrist. *“Perhaps no subject broached by contemporary Bible prophecy teachers engenders more speculation and less sound Biblical exegesis than does the subject of Antichrist. This is certainly due to the mysterious nature of the subject itself, as well as to the fact that no other aspect of Bible prophecy lends itself so nicely to speculation regarding the identification of one specific individual who will become the very personification of evil and the archenemy of Jesus Christ and His gospel.”*
 - In the Bible, the primary meaning of the Greek word translated “anti” is “in place of” or “instead of.” The secondary meaning is “against,” or “opposite to.” So, antichrist will be a counterfeit of Christ who opposes the things of Christ.
 - The term “Antichrist” is specifically mentioned in the Bible in only 4 verses, all in John’s letters. The primary meaning of “antichrist” is “in place of Christ,” that is, a counterfeit replacement for Christ. To counterfeit Christ is to oppose Him or be against Him while pretending to be like Him.
2. **1 John 2:18-19a:** *Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour. 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.*
3. **1 John 2:22:** *Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.*
4. **1 John 4:2-3:** *By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.*
5. **2 John 1:7:** *For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.*
 - 1 John 2:18 – mentions an "antichrist" who is to come plus "many antichrists" who are already present. Verse 2:19a says that *“They (antichrists) went out from us, but they were not of us.”* Thus, these were Antichrists who originated within the church, likely as leaders in the church. They were not external political leaders.
 - 1 John 2:22 – defines the antichrist as anyone who denies the Father and the Son.
 - 1 John 4:2-3 – says the "spirit of the antichrist" is already in the world. Indeed, the spirit of antichrist has been in the world since Adam and Eve were deceived in the Garden.
 - Consider a paraphrase of Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve. Satan implies He knows much more about God than Adam and so he will interpret for them what God has said to them.
 - Satan asks, “Did God really tell you not to eat of the tree of knowledge? Why, that’s not what He meant. Eating this fruit will cause you to become just like God. Though created in His image, you are not truly like Him.”
 - “Unlike Him, you don’t know all things. But you can. All you need to do is eat the fruit and you will know all things like God. Just one bite will do.”

- The temptation to be more like God was so great that Adam and Eve ate the fruit. Their desire was to be “just like God” (able to take God’s place). “You can take God’s place” has been the constant message of antichrists.
 - Hitler was an antichrist, not the Antichrist, but a prototype. His message to the German people was, you are supermen! Hitler said, together we will build a “thousand-year Reich!” Hitler never identified with “the Savior and the cross.” Nor will any antichrist. Hitler preached success through following him not by following God.
 - As John says, the spirit of antichrist (and many antichrists) have been present throughout history.
 - The final Antichrist will logically tempt everyone as he did in the Garden with Adam and Eve.
 - 2 John 7 – warns of “many deceivers” who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. **“Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.”** Note: If Jesus didn’t come in the flesh, He couldn’t die on our behalf.
6. **What Are We to Make of This:** Popular culture and end-times teachings often picture a single, future world dictator called the Antichrist as the ultimate opponent of God.
- In that view, Antichrist is a future, charismatic political world leader who will broker a false peace and enforce a global system of control during a seven-year period of Tribulation that will begin immediately after the Secret Rapture of believers (which dispensationalists believe occurs before the Tribulation).
 - As we have seen, the word “antichrist” appears only in John’s letters, and nowhere does they imply such an antichrist pattern. Question” Does the concept of antichrist appear other places in the Bible?
 - For example, does the “beast of Revelation” and Paul’s “man of lawlessness” point to the antichrist, the ultimate opponent of God? First, consider Paul in 2 Thessalonians.
7. **1 Thessalonians 2:1-4:** *Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.*
- Paul warns believers not to be tricked into thinking that Christ’s return and the Day of the Lord have already arrived (or even that a specific date of return is known, Jesus says no one can know).
 - He explains that two specific warning signs must happen first. (1.) A major spiritual rebellion (or falling away). (2.) the public exposure of an evil figure known as the "man of lawlessness" or "son of destruction."
 - Paul tells believers not to listen to false rumors, fake letters, or wrong teachings that claim the final day of judgment has or is already happening. We are to use good judgment and caution in accepting teachings.
8. **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4:** *Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.*

- Paul says, that the “*apostasia*” comes first. The Greek word *apostasia* means a falling away, defection, or massive rebellion against God. Many scholars view this as a widespread abandonment of Christian truth before the final day, a moral and religious rebellion.
 - Next, Paul speaks of the Man of Lawlessness who appears to be a future individual utterly opposed to God. He will be a man who will act with extreme pride, reject all religious worship of the true God, and sit inside God's temple demanding to be worshipped as God himself.
 - Key to understanding these 2 verses is the meaning of “***he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.***” What is meant by the temple of God? How does this person proclaim himself to be God?
 - The phrase “sitting inside God’s temple” likely signifies a false anti-Christian power attempting to take control of the church by corrupting it from within. That fits with 1 John 2:19a.
 - Because the two concepts use matching characteristics, Biblical scholars often link the “Man of Lawlessness” with the concept of “Antichrist.” Both figures represent a supreme, end-times adversary opposing God, deceiving humanity through Satan-backed power, and demanding worship.
 - The “Man of Lawlessness” appears to be a human person who sets himself up to be worshipped as God inside God’s community of believers. The “Antichrist” represents total opposition to Jesus Christ.
 - Whether or not the “man of lawlessness” is the Antichrist (i.e., or are they two distinct concepts), the “man of lawlessness” is a man of destruction who takes his seat in the temple of God and proclaims himself to be God.
9. **A Broader View of Antichrist:** From the passages in John’s letters, we see general characteristics of the Antichrist and the “last days.” The “last days” include the entire historical period from Christ’s resurrection until His physical return at His Second Coming (the church age). General characteristics of Antichrist include:
10. **Opposition to Christ** that has been present both within and without the church since the beginning of the church on the first Pentecost after Jesus resurrection (Acts 2:17; Heb 1:2; 1Pt 1:5, 20). John says there were such people in the church who were not believers who left his church.
- As opposers of the doctrine of Christ, they exhibited the “spirit of antichrist,” but they were not Antichrist as one final evil individual.
 - Scripture seems to say, near the time of the end, a final Antichrist will be active. Before the “last day” there will be a period of apostasy (called “last days” in 2 Tim 3). Antichrist will be fully expressed in those perilous times.
 - At the time 2 Thessalonians was written (50-52 AD) the second Temple still stood in Jerusalem. It is possible Paul speaks of the Man of Lawlessness sitting in the Second Temple. However, it seems more likely that “in the Temple” is a metaphorical expression.
 - Sitting “inside God’s Temple,” when considered metaphorically (consistent with NT use), is to operate inside the community of believers (the Church).
11. (2.) **“Antichrist Spirit”:** Denies the Trinity and each Person in it. Denys that Jesus is the God-Man. The antichrist spirit thrives by deception, using lies and misunderstandings to its advantage
12. (3.) **Antichrist:** In general, we can say that the Antichrist pretends to be Christ by deception while fiercely fighting Christ’s church. Antichrist is a person (or persons) who combats Christianity by

substituting self for Christ but secretly opposes God. The aim of Antichrist is to take the place of Christ as King of all things.

- There are 6 names in the Bible commonly associated with the Antichrist:
- (1.) Antichrist (1 Jn 2:22) who counterfeits Christ, opposes Him, and strives to replace Him. (2.) The Man of Sin (2 Thess 2:3), who full of sin himself promotes sin in others. (3.) The Son of Perdition or destruction (2 Thess 2:3), who is a destroyer by nature. (4.) The Lawless One (2 Thess 2:8), who is against God's law and will. (5.) The beast from the sea (Rev 13:1), whose name signifies a wild or venomous "beast" who exhibits political power. (6.) the "little horn" (Dan 7:8), whose name signifies increasing political power.
- In all these names, we see that the characteristics of Antichrist are satanic: Antichrist is full of sin, opposed to God, is a destroyer, a wild beast, a deceiver, seeks political power, etc.
- The Antichrist counterfeits and opposes Christ, constantly seeking to replace Him in all things. These characteristics unsurprisingly are also the chief characteristics of Antichrist's master – Satan.
- Satan is the great Deceiver. The final Antichrist will certainly be a great deceiver. He will deny that Jesus is King and Savior and Lord, but still acknowledge Jesus as a great teacher, perhaps going so far as to say Jesus is the (or a) Son of God. A Jehovah's Witness will do that, but they mean something different from us.
- Using words to deceive has been common practice since the deception in the Garden of Eden. Hear 1 John 2:1-3 again. Its message is vital.

13. **1 John 4:1-3:** *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.*

- **"Testing the spirits"** means to critically examine teachings, prophets, and spiritual claims to see whether they originate from God or from a source of deception, i.e., practice spiritual discernment.
- Look around our nation today. Do you think the spirit of antichrist is active?
- OT Babylon is a "type" of the antichristian kingdom Satan seeks. Satan believes he can be like God and has been tremendously successful in the deception used against others, as he attempts to manage world events, rule God's earth, and control people's self-expression. Satan clearly believe he can succeed.

14. **Next:** More on Antichrist.