

An In-Depth Study of the First Letter of Apostle John

[Part 4]

1 John 2:18 [Living Bible] *“Dear children, **this world’s last hour has come.** You have heard about the antichrist who is coming, the one who is against Christ, and already many such persons have appeared. This makes us all the more certain that the end of the world is near.”*

It is very important that we should understand what the apostle John means when he speaks of “*the last hour.*”

We have already seen the term “*world*” refers to human society and its customs rather than the physical creation.

The idea of the last days and last hour runs throughout the Christian Bible.

Genesis 49:1 [King James] *“And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the **last days.**”*

The last days referred to the time when the people of Israel would at last enter into the Promised Land.

Isaiah 2:2-4 [NIV] *“In the **last days** the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.”*

This is a prophecy of what would eventually happen when God would take over the rulership of all humanity. The centre of rulership would be in the New Jerusalem.

Micah 4:1-4 [NIV] *“In the **last days** the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more. Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, and no-one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.”*

Referring to the same time of God’s ultimate rule over most of the nations in the world.

Acts 2:17 [NIV] *“In the **last days**, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”*

This is referring to the period of time between the first and second coming of Jesus Christ.

We are now living in this period of time.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 [NIV] *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the **last days**. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.”*

A vivid description of what society would be like during this period between the two comings of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:3-10 [NIV] *“First of all, you must understand that in the **last days** scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But **the day of the Lord will come like a thief**. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.”*

The apostle Peter dramatically warns people to **not** spend time piling up possessions but to strive to develop Christian character, which will **not** be destroyed at this time of Christ’s second coming.

People may scoff at such a belief, but history will in the end prove them painfully wrong.

Deeply woven in the scriptures of the Christian Bible is the concept of all time being divided into two ages.

This present age – an age in which humanity, mostly cut off from the Creator God, is ruled by Satan.

2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV] *“The god of **this age** has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

Who is the “God of this age”?

Revelation 12:9 [NIV] *“The **great dragon** was hurled down, that ancient **serpent** called the **devil**, or **Satan, who leads the whole world astray**. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*

Satan who has led the vast majority of humanity away from the true Creator God.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 [NIV] *“For such men are **false apostles**, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for **Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light**. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

False religious leaders who are under the influence of Satan.

1 John 5:18-21 [NIV] *“We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. We know that we are children of God, and that **the whole world is under the control of the evil one**. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.”*

Satan controls all that happens in society and the cultures of this world, at this present time.

Only through submission to Jesus Christ and obedience to the Word of God, the Christian Bible, can we avoid being under the control of Satan, and influenced by his evil nature.

We overcome this influence of Satan in two ways.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

Acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and our own lives being a light to this deceived society.

The age to come – this future age is mentioned by many of the prophets.

We have already read of two of these prophecies, **Isaiah 2:2-4** and **Micah 4:1-4**.

Revelation 20:1-3 [NIV] *“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.”*

With Satan out of the way this New Age to come can start.

Revelation 20:4-6 [NIV] *“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”*

A new age yet to come after the second coming of Jesus Christ to rule all who remain alive after the great tribulation, which is a wakeup call for all who have rejected the gospel message and Jesus Christ who was the messenger who brought it to humanity.

Revelation 20:11-15 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

This is a different resurrection to that which happened at Jesus Christ’s Second Coming.

The holy scriptures, the books of the Christian Bible, will be opened to understanding for all those, past and present, who were deceived and blinded by Satan.

The response to this revelation through the Holy Spirit for all these people, will be judged by the ruling Jesus Christ.

Revelation 21:1-8 [NIV] *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old*

order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death."

This is the new age fully to come for all humanity who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Above is a very brief description just to open our minds to this future history of humanity.

The “*last days*” is the period of time between these two ages, and they began with the first coming of Jesus Christ and last until His second coming.

Antichrist – all those who oppose Jesus Christ and His message of hope fall into this term antichrists, rather than false prophets who may be presenting a false Christ to those who listen to them.

The apostle John does **not** dispute that at the end of this age there will be one evil being who will be called “*antichrist*”.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 [NIV] “*Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for [that day will not come] until the rebellion occurs and **the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, **proclaiming himself to be God.**”*

Paul does **not** use the term “*antichrist*” but “*the man of sin*” or “*lawlessness*”, of one claiming to be God and seeking worship.

2 Thessalonians 2:5-10 [NIV] “*Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. **For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work**; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then **the lawless one will be revealed**, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*”

This is **not** referring to Satan but a human being who is empowered by Satan.

This final culminating challenge to all things of God and all that is good by Satan, will be led by this person who is totally empowered by Satan.

Jesus Christ will destroy this person and the last supreme challenge of Satan will be defeated.

Some of the symbolism around the antichrist refers plainly to Satan.

For example, the “*great red dragon*” of **Revelation 12:3, 9** plainly refers to Satan.

But the “*beast*” of **Revelation 11:7** is **not** identified as Satan but a being closely related to Satan as his works show.

This article does **not** seek to identify the person named as the “*antichrist*” but to point to the fact that such a person will appear at the “*last days*” empowered by Satan.

As we have seen the “*last time*” is not only a time of ending, but a time of new beginnings, it is not only a time of destruction but a time of re-creation.

The Greek preposition “*anti*” can have two meanings, it can mean “*against*” or “*in place of*”.

So “*antichrist*” can mean those who are against Christ **not** believing Him to be the Son of God or those who are seeking to take the place of Jesus Christ within the Christian community.

One in open opposition, the other will be a subtle undermining of the Christian’s faith in Jesus Christ by infiltration within the Christian community.

Antichrist is both a principle and one specific person both coming from the Christian’s enemy, Satan.

The early Christian church was well forewarned as to the influence of “*antichrist*” and we in this generation need to heed the same warning.

Mark 13:5-6 [NIV] *“Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no-one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.”*

Jesus warned His disciples personally.

Matthew 24:3-5 [NIV] *“As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Jesus answered: “Watch out that no-one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”*

Jesus gave this warning in context of “*end of the age*”.

Acts 28:25-31 [NIV] *“They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: “Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.” For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’ “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Paul gave the elders in the church a similar warning about false prophets and those who are anti the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Just as the Holy Spirit inspires true Christian teachers, so an evil spirit of antichrist inspires false teachers and false prophets.

This is a battle that is taking place in the minds of all human beings at the speed of thought.

The special task that confronts the church and all individual Christians is to learn the technique of mobilising the forces and media of mass communication to counteract the poison of these evil ideas with which the minds of humans are deliberately indoctrinated.

This website seeks to do this. Please make its existence known to as many people as you can so that its influence for good can be spread amongst all humans worldwide.

1 John 2:19 [NIV] *“They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.”*

The apostle John is referring to a time of sifting in the church, the false teachers had voluntarily left the church. Their conduct had shown that they were **not** really part of the church.

Membership of the church is no guarantee that a person belongs to Jesus Christ and not to the antichrist.

External physical membership of a Christian fellowship is **no** proof of an inner union with Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 9:6 [NIV] *“It is **not** as though God’s word had failed. For **not all** who are descended from Israel are Israel.”*

Paul is expressing the same situation.

God’s Word came to Abraham in the form of covenant promises.

The true children of Abraham are **not** just the biological descendants of Abraham. The true children of the promises given to Abraham and his descendants are those who trust in God’s Word, as Abraham did, and in what Jesus Christ has done for them.

Romans 2:28-29 [NIV] *“A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God.”*

The same situation is explained in this passage of scripture.

Galatians 3:6-9 [NIV] *“Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” **Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.** The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”*

This is the only way we can be blessed by the promises made to Abraham, and be considered to be righteous, because we have the same faith in God as Abraham expressed in his life.

1 John 2:20-21 [NIV] *“**But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.** I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.”*

We understand the truth found in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, **only** through the Holy Spirit working in us.

John 16:13 [NIV] *“**But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.**”*

A promise from Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit will guide all who are His disciples into an understanding of His words and those of the Holy Spirit inspired apostles like John.

1 John 2:22-23 [NIV] *“**Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist, he denies the Father and the Son. No-one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.**”*

John is pointing out that false teachers are also those who accept God the Father but do **not** accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God the Father.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 [NIV] *“For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and **that rock was Christ.**”*

It was Jesus Christ who sustained the Israelites in the wilderness and brought them out of Egypt, symbolic of sin.

Matthew 16:13-18 [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, **“Who do people say the Son of Man is?”** They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**”*

Jesus Christ is the same rock upon which the New Testament Christian church is founded.

1 Corinthians 3:11 [NIV] *“For no-one can lay any **foundation** other than the one already laid, which is **Jesus Christ.**”*

Jesus Christ the foundation stone.

Isaiah 28:16 [NIV] *“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, **a precious cornerstone** for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.”*

Referring to Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 32:3-6 [NIV] *“I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! **He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just.** A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. They have acted corruptly towards him; to their shame they are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation. Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?”*

This could only refer to Jesus Christ.

John 1:1-4 [NIV] *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God.** He was with God in the beginning. **Through him all things were made;** without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and **that life was the light of men.**”*

Jesus Christ was the One who created all things including Adam and Eve.

If we deny that Jesus is the Christ we also deny the existence of God the Father.

Matthew 11:27 [NIV] *“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No-one knows the Son except the Father, and **no-one knows the Father except the Son** and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”*

We **only** know God the Father through knowing Jesus Christ.

John 14:8-9 [NIV] *“Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? **Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

Only by having a relationship with Jesus Christ can we “know” – [Greek word “gnōskō” meaning an intimate relationship] the Father.

1 John 2:24-25 [NIV] *“See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us, even eternal life.”*

We **only** receive eternal life by accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God and our only Saviour.

1 John 2:26-29 [NIV] *“I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit, just as it has taught you, remain in him. And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.”*

The apostle John, in this part of his letter, gives us two practical pieces of advice.

a) Make sure that we do have the Holy Spirit working in us.

[If you have any doubts about this I suggest you download and read the articles on the Holy Spirit on this website. Especially ‘*Are We Resisting The Work Of The Holy Spirit?*’]

We can then use the scriptures that the Holy Spirit opens up to us to defend our mind and spirit against the influence of false teachers.

b) Continue to reflect the life of Jesus Christ in our own lives.

Applying the following scriptures, making them the “keys” to living.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

The **only** safe way to conduct our life.

Philippians 2:1-8 [NIV] *“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!”*

The only way we can have mind of Jesus Christ is to humble ourselves and become a servant to our fellow human beings.

Only then can we face the return of Jesus Christ and our personal time of being judged by Him.

Even if we have doubts about the physical return of Jesus Christ the above still remains true.