

## 1 John Lesson 6 Articles

John begins this verse with the familiar use of *paidia* to show that he is addressing the community as a whole. This usage also serves as a transition to a new section. He declares to them that it is the “last hour.” This last hour, viewed as a theologically technical term, denotes a period of time, whether long or short, that will usher in the termination of all time and the revealing of the final salvation promised by God.

John asserts that it is the last hour because of the fact that there were many antichrists that had come. They were trying to lure members of the community into a world that is passing away (v. 17) and into the darkness. These individuals, as their designation indicates, are against Christ. They hold to a heretical Christology and are deceivers whose false views are put forward to lead believers astray and to oppose Christ.

One form of the Christological error present in the community is that the secessionists (v. 19) that emphasizes the divinity of Jesus at the expense of his humanity. It is also possible that there are those who emphasized the humanity of Jesus to the point that they failed to see that, as the Christ, he is God. (Both of these interpretations are possible based on where one places the emphasis in 2:22.)

It takes wisdom and perception to understand which theological issues are open to discussion and honest disagreement and which ones are so clearly essential that schism must be preferred to compromise.<sup>268</sup> John examines the problem and rightly concludes that the proper understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ is fundamental to Christianity and cannot be compromised. In a sense this debate has continued in discussions of New Testament theology throughout the twentieth century, in which there was a bifurcation of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Critical scholarship has argued that these entities cannot be reconciled. It seems that John faced a similar issue in his day and argued forcefully that this divided, if not schizophrenic, Christology cannot be tolerated by the believing church.

The verse concludes with an inclusio through which John brings the reader back to the initial point of the verse. The rise of antichrists should not cause the believer to be dismayed or disheartened but should be an encouragement because it is a sign that the return of Jesus Christ is imminent. This antichrist activity is indicative of the reality that the real Christ has come and believers are living in a period of time when the kingdom of God has been inaugurated and awaits its final consummation.<sup>1</sup>

Not even John the apostle knew what was in the hearts of those who made up his local church. He did not know that some members of his congregation did not truly know Jesus, until they abandoned the faith.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Culpepper, *1, 2, 3 John*, 45.

<sup>1</sup> Akin, D. L. (2001). *1, 2, 3 John* (Vol. 38, pp. 113–115). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (1 Jn 2:19). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.