

## **Briefing Document: 1 John Lesson 43**

**December 3, 2025**

### **Executive Summary**

This briefing synthesizes the core themes from a lesson centered on 1 John 2:19, which explores the phenomenon of individuals departing from the church. The central argument posits that the departure of people who follow false teachers, or "antichrists," is not a failure of the church or its doctrine. Instead, it is a divinely overseen process of purification. These departures serve as an "unmasking," providing clear evidence that those who leave were never genuine believers. True salvation, it is argued, is inseparably linked to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints; genuine faith is proven by a believer's endurance and continuance in the truth. This process, while potentially unsettling, should ultimately strengthen the faith of the remaining believers, affirming the truth they hold and revealing the hypocrisy of those who were false from the start.

### **Church Announcements and Prayer Concerns**

Before the main lesson, several church-related announcements and prayer requests were shared, providing context for the community's activities and concerns.

### **Key Announcements**

- **Missions Focus:** The monthly mission focus is KWRB 90.9, a Christian radio station in Sierra Vista.
- **Memory Verse:** The commemorative verse for the month is Matthew 1:21, *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."*
- **Upcoming Events & Deadlines:**
  - **Christmas Card Box:** Deadline for submissions is December 14th.
  - **Christmas Program Rehearsals:** Scheduled for December 6th and 13th at 10:00 AM.
  - **Men's Breakfast:** December 13th at 7:30 AM.
  - **New Life Women's Fellowship:** December 13th at 11:00 AM at the church.
  - **Gift Wrapping:** December 17th, in place of the regular evening service.
  - **Puppet Performance:** Sunday evening, December 21st, followed by light refreshments.
  - **Candlelight Service:** December 24th at 6:30 PM, preceded by caroling at 5:30 PM.
- **Volunteer & Support Needs:**
  - **AV Volunteers:** A need for backup volunteers was mentioned.
  - **DAV Angel Tree:** Forms are available for veterans who wish to have their names included.

◦ **New Life Kids Christmas Store:** Donations are sought, particularly for young men and adult men.

◦ **Church Setup:** Help is needed on Monday, December 15th, at 10:00 AM to set up the patio and on Wednesday, December 17th, to wrap gifts.

#### Prayer Requests

- **Chris Davis:** For recovery following a heart procedure that had complications requiring an overnight hospital stay.
- **Bea, Mike, and Renee:** For wisdom for Mike and Renee regarding Bea's care.
- **Renee:** For continued recovery and for the successful sale of her father's properties.
- **Barbara:** For her upcoming surgery on Monday.
- **Housing Need:** Prayer was requested to find a rental for approximately \$600/month for an individual or family in need.

#### Core Theological Thesis: The Departure of False Believers (1 John 2:19)

The lesson's central theological examination revolves around 1 John 2:19, presented as the definitive explanation for why individuals, influenced by false teachers, depart from the church fellowship.

#### The Problem: Heresy and Departure

The lesson establishes that heresy and the presence of "antichrists" (those who oppose Christ's doctrine) have been a challenge to the church since its inception. A primary characteristic of these antichrists is their eventual departure from the fellowship. This departure often creates confusion and doubt among the believers who remain, causing them to question the truth they hold.

#### The Explanation: An Analysis of 1 John 2:19

The entire conflict is addressed by the Apostle John in a single verse, which serves as the foundation for the lesson:

*"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."* (1 John 2:19)

This verse is broken down to mean that the act of leaving is conclusive proof that the departing individuals were never genuine members of the body of Christ. Their defection is not a loss of salvation but a revelation of their true spiritual state.

#### The Divine Purpose in Departure

A key argument is that God allows false teachers to infiltrate His church for a specific, purifying purpose. Their function is to "pull out people from the church who are not genuine believers."

- **A Tool for Purification:** God uses "liars and deceivers and false prophets to purge his church." The departure of false believers is described as an "unmasking" that reveals their true character.
- **Historical Parallel:** This divine allowance of negative influences is compared to God permitting a "messenger of Satan to buffet" the Apostle Paul to keep him humble (2 Corinthians 12).
- **Good from Evil:** The treacherous work of antichrists, though meant for evil, is ultimately overseen by God for the good and purification of His church.

### The Nature of True and False Believers

The lesson draws a sharp distinction between the characteristics and responses of true believers versus false believers when confronted with deceptive teaching.

### Characteristics of Antichrists and False Teachers

- **Infiltration and Deception:** They enter the church and spread falsehoods, sowing dissension and causing believers to question the truth.
- **Magnetic Pull:** They act like magnets, drawing away those who are not genuinely rooted in the faith.
- **Polluting Influence:** False believers within the church are likened to leaven that pollutes the whole lump or a single rotten apple that corrupts an entire barrel.
- **Modern Avenues:** Deception is no longer confined to physical infiltration. False teaching is widely available through the internet, podcasts, television, and radio, allowing antichrists to reach a broader audience.

### The Security of True Believers

In contrast, genuine believers are presented as secure in their faith and immune to the deceptions of false teachers.

- **The Role of the Holy Spirit:** True Christians possess an "anointing" from God, identified as the Holy Spirit, who teaches them all things and enables them to discern truth from error. As 1 John 2:27 states, *"But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you... just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him."*
- **Abiding in Christ:** Because they abide in Christ, true believers will not abandon the truth for a lie. The faith granted to them by God is permanent.
- **Following the Holy Spirit:** While true Christians may leave one church for another, this move is prompted by the leading of the Holy Spirit, not by the influence of a false teacher.

### The Doctrine of Perseverance

The concept of perseverance is presented as the ultimate proof of genuine salvation. It is identified as a core tenet of Reformed theology, specifically the "P" in the Calvinistic acronym TULIP.

## Salvation Proven by Endurance

The central principle is that "salvation is proven by your perseverance." Those who profess belief but later leave the faith demonstrate, according to scripture, that they were never truly saved. This stands in contrast to theological systems where salvation can be lost and regained.

## Scriptural Support for Perseverance

Several passages are cited to support the necessity of continuing in the faith as evidence of true redemption:

- **Colossians 1:22-23:** Believers are presented as *"holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel."* The continuation in faith is the condition that proves the reality of the reconciliation.
- **John 8:31:** Jesus states, *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed."*
- **Hebrews 3:14:** *"For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."*

## The Impossibility of Renewal After Apostasy

The lesson references Hebrews 6:4-6 to describe the state of those who have been exposed to the truth but fall away. It states it is *"impossible for those who were once enlightened... if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."* This passage is used to underscore the finality of such a departure, framing it as a public shaming of Christ.

## Implications for the Church

The doctrine of perseverance and the reality of antichrists have direct implications for how the church understands itself and maintains its spiritual health.

## Maintaining Purity Through Discipline

- The process of church discipline, as outlined in **Matthew 18:15-17**, is presented as a necessary tool for maintaining the purity of the church.
- The process involves approaching a sinning individual privately, then with witnesses, then before the church leadership, and finally, telling the church.
- The goal at every stage is repentance and restoration. If the person refuses to repent, they are to be put out of the fellowship and treated as an unbeliever, protecting the church from the infection of unrepentant sin.

## Strengthening Faith, Not Doubt

The departure of false believers should not shake the faith of the congregation. Rather, it should produce confidence by:

- **Unmasking Hypocrisy:** It reveals the true nature of those who were never genuine.
- **Validating the Truth:** It affirms that the truth held by the church is powerful enough to repel those who are false.
- **Confirming the "Last Hour":** The presence and activity of antichrists are a sign that the church is in the "last hour"—the messianic era between Christ's first and second comings—which serves as evidence of Christ's eventual return.

The lesson concludes with a prayer for understanding and for family and friends who have left the church, asking God to help the congregation grow and to protect the purity of His church, which He will one day call home.