

Briefing Document: "1 John Lesson 45"

December 31, 2025

Executive Summary

This document synthesizes the core theological teachings presented in the lesson, focusing on the defining characteristics of an "antichrist" versus those of a true Christian. The central argument posits that the distinction between these two groups hinges on their relationship to the truth of Jesus Christ and their possession of the Holy Spirit.

An antichrist, as defined by the Apostle John, is not a single eschatological figure but rather anyone who denies the foundational truth of Jesus Christ's divine and human nature. Such individuals are characterized by their departure from fellowship, denial of the faith, and attempts to deceive believers. Their motivations are rooted in covetousness, and their methods involve secretly introducing destructive heresies, leading to the blaspheming of "the way of truth." These actions have maligned the perception of Christianity, fostering a worldly view that no single, universal Christian truth exists.

In stark contrast, a true Christian is fundamentally protected from permanent deception. This protection stems from an "anointing from the Holy One," which is identified as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. This divine anointing ensures that believers "know all things" necessary for salvation and perseverance. While a believer may experience periods of doubt or questioning, they cannot ultimately abandon the faith. This anointing grants every believer direct access to God's truth, negating any claims of secret, elevated knowledge or a "special anointing" promoted by false teachers. All believers possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit and lack nothing essential for their faith and spiritual life.

Detailed Analysis

Profile of an Antichrist

The lesson provides a detailed profile of individuals described as "antichrists," drawing primarily from the writings of the Apostle John and supported by an analysis of 2 Peter, chapter 2.

Defining the Term

- **An Attitude, Not a Person:** The term "antichrist" is presented not as the singular, future Antichrist, but as an attitude and a category of person.

- **Core Definition:** Following John's teaching, an antichrist is defined as anyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ, specifically denying His deity and humanity. Entire denominations that deviate from this core truth are categorized as being composed of antichrists.

Core Characteristics

1. **They Depart from the Fellowship:** Antichrists are noted to originate from within the church but eventually leave. In doing so, they often draw away others who are not true believers. This departure is framed as a divine purging that increases the purity of the church.

2. **They Deny the Faith:** The fundamental error of an antichrist is the denial of Jesus Christ's nature. This includes heresies that claim Christ was merely a man and not divine, or that He was a divine spirit and not truly human. Denying the Son is equivalent to denying the Father.

3. **They Deceive the Faithful:** A primary activity of antichrists is to infiltrate the church to mislead believers with false teachings. However, it is asserted that a true believer cannot be deceived into permanently abandoning the faith.

Motivation and Methods (from 2 Peter 2)

The teaching references 2 Peter 2 to provide a deeper description of the methods and motivations of these false teachers.

- **Methods of Infiltration:** They operate covertly, "secretly bring[ing] in destructive heresies." (2 Peter 2:1) Their success is significant, as "many will follow their destructive ways." (2 Peter 2:2)

- **Core Motivation:** Their actions are driven by covetousness—a desire for money, fame, or prestige. They "exploit you with deceptive words." (2 Peter 2:3)

- **Descriptive Language:** Scripture uses harsh language to describe them:

- They are like "natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed." (2 Peter 2:12)
- They are called "spots" and "blemishes," analogous to stains or scabs. (2 Peter 2:13)
- They have a "heart trained in covetous practices" and are called "accursed children." (2 Peter 2:14)
- They are compared to the prophet Balaam, who could be hired to prophesy falsely for personal gain. (2 Peter 2:15)

◦ They are described as functionally useless and deceptive, like "wells without water" and "clouds carried by a tempest." (2 Peter 2:17)

• **Guaranteed Judgment:** Their judgment is not idle, and their "destruction does not slumber." (2 Peter 2:3) They will ultimately "utterly perish in their own corruption." (2 Peter 2:12)

Profile of a True Christian

The lesson contrasts the profile of the antichrist with three key characteristics of a genuine Christian, based on 1 John 2.

1. Christians Are Not Deceived:

◦ A true Christian cannot be permanently led astray or deceived into abandoning the faith. While they may experience doubt, questioning, or spiritual infancy, their faith will ultimately persevere. Doubt is not the same as denial.

◦ This security is based on the statement, *"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."* (1 John 2:20-21)

◦ Anyone who permanently leaves the church for a false religious system demonstrates they were never a true believer.

2. Christians Accept the Faith:

◦ Salvation is impossible without knowing and believing the truth of the gospel—that Christ died for one's sins. While deep theological knowledge grows over time, the core truth is present from the beginning of a believer's life.

◦ The false teachers of John's time (identified as proto-Gnostics) claimed to have a superior, secret, and "esoteric" knowledge that set them apart.

◦ John refutes this by asserting that all believers are "in the know" and possess the necessary truth. There is no secret knowledge or higher level of spiritual insight hidden from the common believer.

3. Christians Possess a True Anointing:

◦ The false teachers claimed a "special anointing" that made them spiritually superior. John's response is that every believer has a true anointing from God.

◦ This anointing is not a special status for a select few but a universal possession of all Christians. It is identified directly with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

◦ Scriptural support is drawn from *2 Corinthians 1:21-22*: "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."^[4]

◦ This anointing comes from "the Holy One," a title for Jesus Christ, as confirmed by a demon's testimony in *Luke 4:34* ("I know who You are—the Holy One of God!") and Peter's sermon in *Acts 3:14*.

Key Theological Concepts

• **The Nature of Truth:** The teaching strongly opposes the postmodern rejection of universal truth. It affirms that there is a single, objective, and knowable truth in Christianity centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ. The world's inability to see this singular truth is attributed to the proliferation of false teachings from antichrist figures.

• **The Role of the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is presented as the anointing of God on a believer. He is the "guarantee" of salvation, the believer's teacher who reveals the things of God, and the source of power (*dunamis*).^[3] Possession of the Holy Spirit is the defining mark of a true Christian (*Romans 8:9*).

• **Perseverance of the Believer:** A recurring theme is that true believers will persevere in the faith. Those who depart permanently from the truth reveal that they were never genuinely part of the faith to begin with. The indwelling Spirit ensures the believer will abide in Christ.

Contextual Observations

• **Contemporary Cultural Challenges:** The lesson connects the ancient problem of false teachers to modern societal philosophies.

◦ **Postmodernism:** Characterized by its rejection of universal truth, blurring of boundaries, pluralism, and subjectivity. This worldview makes it difficult for people to comprehend the Christian claim of a single, exclusive truth.

◦ **Existentialism:** A worldview that posits life has no inherent meaning, leaving individuals to create their own purpose and values. This is said to lead to anxiety, as people lack a spiritual anchor and are "blown about to and fro."

• **The Problem of False Religions:** The watching world sees a broad spectrum of beliefs under the "Christian" label, from cult-like "mindless fundamentalism" to "pseudo-intellectual liberalism" that embraces universalism. This confusion prevents outsiders from understanding what a true Christian is, making personal testimony about one's specific, biblically-based beliefs essential.

Referenced Greek Terms

The following table details the Greek words referenced during the lesson.

Term	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition and Context
<i>Ginosko</i> [¹]	ghee-NOH-skoh	"To know." This is the root of the term <i>Gnostic</i> , which referred to groups who claimed to possess a special, hidden knowledge necessary for salvation.
<i>Chrisma</i> [²]	KREE-smah	"An anointing" or "ointment." Used in 1 John to refer to the anointing that believers receive from God, which is identified as the Holy Spirit. It is the root for the word "charismatic."
<i>Dunamis</i> [³]	DOO-nah-miss	"Power," "strength," or "ability." It is the Greek word for the power believers receive from the Holy Spirit. It is the root for the English word "dynamite."
<i>Arrabōn</i> [⁴]	ar-rha-BOHN	"A pledge, down payment, guarantee." This term, used in 2 Corinthians 1:22, describes the Holy Spirit as God's guarantee or down payment to believers, ensuring their future salvation.

[¹]: Mentioned in the discussion of Gnostics. [²]: Mentioned in the discussion of the believer's anointing. [³]: Referenced in the context of the power of the Holy Spirit. [⁴]: Referenced in the discussion of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee.