



A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under [Bible Studies](#) in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser's back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material.

Quick Links to the Study

I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

II. [Message](#)

- a. [Antichrists are here, vv. 18-19](#)
- b. [Divine anointing, vv. 20-25](#)
- c. [Defending against deceivers, vv. 26-27](#)

Standing firm in the truth of the Gospel. This is the central focus of our passage. Given the theological controversies of recent years, especially among Baptists in the United States, what does this imply? Is the Gospel defined by some humanly devised creed or confession of faith? What does 'standing firm' mean? Who are the antichrists who deny Jesus and seek to replace authentic gospel with a false version? How do believers prepare themselves to resist the false teaching coming from these antichrists? These are some of the issues surrounding [1 John 2:18-27](#). And they merit consideration in the study of this passage.



I. Context

[Previous studies](#) in 1 John will provide most of the background material. New material will be added in order to supplement existing research.

This document is one of five in the so-called Johannine corpus of the New Testament. There are the gospel, three letters and the book of Revelation. The name is derived from the early church tradition that assigned authorship of these five documents to the apostle John. But in reality, only Revelation comes close to identifying itself as having come from the apostle. With the gospel and the three letters no mention is made anywhere internally about who was responsible for their composition. Thus the [Church Fathers](#) from the second Christian century to the middle ages become the primary external sources for attempting an identification. Interestingly, one doesn't find a unified voice here until very, very late in the ancient period leading up to the middle ages. So we will have to look carefully at the external history (below) in examining that issue in detail.

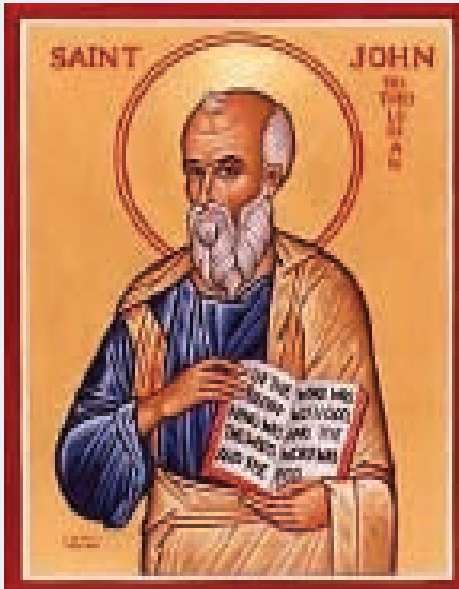


a. Historical

External History. Who was responsible for the composition of this document? 1 John is one of three letters in the General (Catholic) Letter section of our New Testament with the name of 'John' attached to them. Careful reading of the texts of these letters will leave the reader searching in vain for any direct mentioning of John as the writer of any of these letters. The only person's name mentioned in 1 John is Jesus Christ. In 2 and 3 John the sender

of these letters is identified only as "the elder."

Where then does the idea that a John wrote these letters originate, since it cannot be based directly on references to the writer inside these documents? The answer comes from early Christian tradition in the second through eighth centuries. Yet, careful examination of this body of early Christian literature indicates difference of opinion over the author of this letter. The term 'The Elder' in 2 and 3 John was grad-



ually identified with the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, in the gospels in many early Christian circles, but not in all. Papias of Hierapolis in 130 AD challenged this view, as did Dionysius of Alexandria in 262 AD. Eventually, however, the linking of the

three letters, along with the fourth gospel and the book of Revelation, with the apostle John prevailed and became the basis for the headings of these three letters containing the name 'John.' Current biblical scholarship reflects divided opinion on how reliable this early church tradition is. Serious arguments, both pro and con, can be marshaled in support of either side of the issue.

My personal *inclination* is to link the three letters together (at minimum, only 1 John) with the fourth gospel in a common authorship, although readily acknowledging the difficulties of such. At best, tentative conclusions must be drawn, rather than hard-and-fast judgments. The contents of the three documents provide some helpful insight into the historical situation surrounding their composition toward the close of the first Christian century.

Where was this document written? Most scholars, although skeptical of early church tradition about John the apostle as author, will nevertheless accept the early church idea that associates the writing of 1 John in and around the ancient city of [Ephesus](#)



toward the end of the first Christian century. Within the traditional view of authorship, the understanding is that the apostle John spent the last several decades of his earthly life in ministry to Christians in Ephesus.

If correct, then this letter emerges after the initial preaching of the gospel in the city by Paul in the middle 50s. Another apostle has become a revered leader of the Christian movement there. This letter is then addressed to the believing community at Ephesus, in a manner similar to Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, although we can determine far less of the specific circumstances surrounding the Ephesian community of faith at this point in time.

To whom was this document written initially, and why? The above exploration probed the historical identification of the recipients of the letter from early church tradition. From the contents of 1 John some insight can be gleaned about the first readers of this letter. Through a careful reading of the document, one can see that the teaching authority of the writer had been challenged and thus the letter was responding to that challenge. An alternative understanding of Christianity was being set forth in the Christian community(s) of Asia, and this new view of the gospel led to behavioral patterns that were different from those set forth in the apostolic gospel message as G. B. Caird ("Johannine Letters," *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) describes:

"Throughout the first letter we find a series of warnings against those who make claims which are not justified by the facts: 'if we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness' (1:6); 'if we say we have no sin' (1:8); 'he who says 'I know him' but disobeys his commandments' (2:4); 'he who says he abides in him' (2:6); 'if any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother' (4:20). It is obvious that these denunciations are not made without good reason and that someone has actually been making such professions. The opposition has been laying claim to a special knowledge and love of God and to a peculiarly intimate relationship with him which has set them above the common distinctions between good and evil and therefore above the demands of Christian ethics. It is probable, too, that the initial message of the letter: 'God is light and in him is no darkness at all,' is directed against a theology which held that God comprehended in himself both light and darkness."

This opposition movement had questioned the incarnation of Christ (2:20; 4:2). Although previously participating in the apostolic believing community, they had abandoned it (2:19) in order to begin their

own version of Christianity, and it had been met with pagan acceptance (4:5). G.B. Caird sums up the identity of this group with this statement:

“An aberrant Christianity, which teaches salvation by esoteric knowledge, excites an enthusiasm devoid of moral concern, and nourishes a spirituality contemptuous of all things material, can be identified unmistakably as an early form of the movement which came to be known as Gnosis or GNOSTICISM. At this stage, however, there is no sign of the gross sensuality which was countenanced by some of the later developments of the Gnostic heresy; the moral laxity here stigmatized consists solely in an indifference to the practical demands of the law of love.”

Therefore, the main thrust of 1 John was to assure the members of the apostolic community of the essence of authentic Christianity, both in its belief and in its ethics, as a corrective to the false teaching being spread by the opposition. What we see in 1 John is a Christian leader appealing to believers to base their religious experience on a firm foundation, rather than the foundation of falsehood and error.

Internal History. The general nature of the contents of the letter tend to minimize time and place markers in the text. Such is the case with 2:18-27. No specific place markers surface in these verses. And the time markers are very generalized. Thus these will be treated in the exegesis of the text below.



b. Literary

Genre. Although labeled an ancient letter, this document bears few of the marks that are found in ancient letters. See my discussion on this at cranfordville.com under <http://cranfordville.com/NT-genre.htm#Epistle>.

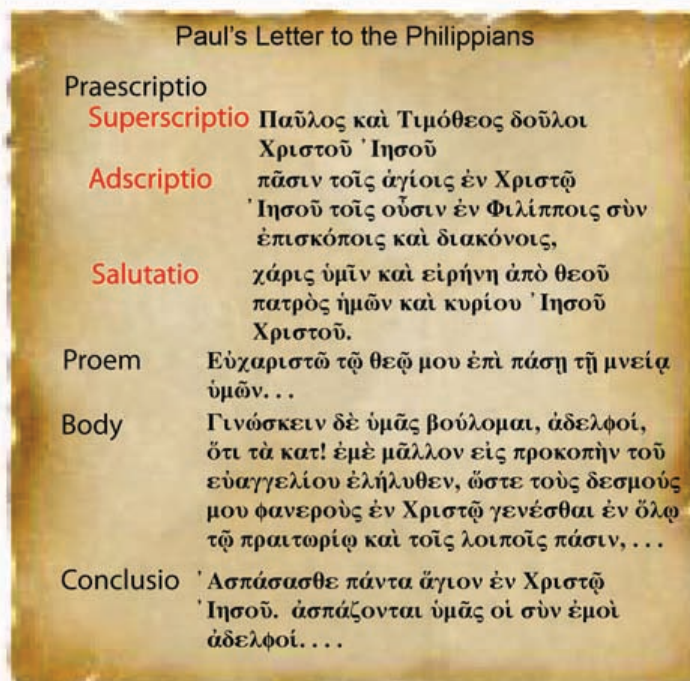
In contrast, [2 John](#) and [3 John](#) follow ancient letter patterns very closely. The prologue of [1 John 1:1-4](#) somewhat sets the foundation for the remainder of the document (NRSV):

“1 We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life — 2 this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— 3 we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”

As to literary form, the Bible student can only conclude that 1 John is an ancient letter in a very loose definition of the term. More accurate is that the document is an ancient tractate defending a specific theological/philosophical viewpoint.

The text should be read against this backdrop.

Literary Context. The development of ideas



Ancient Letter on papyrus

from 1:5 through 5:21 does not follow a logical progression of moving from one idea to the next one etc. The line of reasoning in 1 John has often been labeled ‘spiral’ (Caird). This means a hand full of ideas will be tossed out and will resurface periodically either individually, or in connection to others, frequently in new combinations of thoughts. The most dominant ideas relate to who God and Christ are, and to the basic principle of Christian love.

The emphasis on love has been summed up well by David Rensberger in the *Abingdon Commentary*:

The centrality of love can be seen in the things for which it is the signal and test: knowing and abiding in God (2:3-6; 3:23-24; 4:7-8, 12, 16), walking in the light (2:9-11), being God’s child (2:29; 3:10; 4:7), eternal life (3:14), confidence at the judgment (4:17-18), and our own love for God (4:20–5:1). People do not become children of God by their own good deeds; to be born of God is a gift of God’s love, which calls forth and enables Christians’ love (3:1-2; 4:9-11, 19). Yet love united to christological confession is the one unailing test of those who truly are God’s children (4:7; 5:1). Where there is no love at work, there is no Christianity. This implies that Christianity is not purely a matter of

individual salvation, since love cannot be practiced by one person alone. Knowing God, loving God, being confident of eternal life—all the things that we might consider “spiritual”—are real only in concrete living in community with other human beings. “Beloved, let us love one another” (4:7).

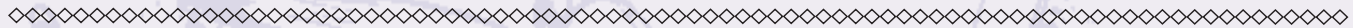
Another theme relates to opposition to false teachers and this theme surfaces repeatedly throughout the document. The historical identification of these individuals has been treated above under **Internal History**. Here the literary emphasis on these individuals needs some attention. Our pas-

sage, notably 2:18, marks a new direction in which the writer increasingly turns on the false teachers whom he here labels as ‘antichrists.’ They have denied Jesus as the Christ. They do not possess the teaching presence of the Holy Spirit (v. 27), and thus have no understanding of Christ. In chapters three through five other aspects of their teaching will be exposed as contrary to the Gospel. Thus 2:18-27 stand as an important turning point in seeking to understand the situation that the writer was addressing with this document.

II. Message

Literary Structure. The internal thought flow is somewhat challenging to assess, as is explained in the [Summary of the Rhetorical Structure](#) of the Greek text in the larger internet study. As noted above in the [Literary Aspects](#) section, the organization of ideas in 1 John resembles a swirl or a kaleidoscope more than a logically designed house. This is certainly true in our passage.

Yet the thought flow does move from the antichrists (vv. 18-19) to his readers possessing the divine anointing of the Holy Spirit (vv. 20-25) then back to the deceivers with the divine anointing as the best defense against their influence (vv. 26-27).



a. Antichrists are here, vv. 18-19

Greek NT

2:18 Παιδία, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν, ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν. 2:19 ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν, μεμενήκεισαν ἂν μεθ’ ἡμῶν· ἀλλ’ ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν.

NASB

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

NRSV

18 Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us.

NLT

18 Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the end of the world has come. 19 These people left our churches because they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left us, it proved that they do not belong with us.

Notes:

The two Greek sentences focus on distinctive themes: the surfacing of the antichrists in the final hour, and their disassociating themselves from the believing communities of faith.

The surfacing of the antichrists in the final hour, v. 19: “Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists

have come. From this we know that it is the last hour” (Παιδία, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν, ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.). This interesting declaration revolves around three items: 1) the last hour; 2) the coming of the antichrist; and 3) the presence of many antichrists

already.

1) *The last hour.*

This phrase, ἐσχάτη ὥρα, alludes to the time just prior to the second coming of Christ. The nature of the Greek construction must not be overlooked in trying to understand what is intended. Steven Smalley (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) notes on this:

The expression ἐσχάτη ὥρα (“final hour”) lacks the definite article; and Westcott (69) concludes, therefore, that the reference is to the “general character” of the period under review (a final hour), rather than to its actual ending (the final hour). However, the context (see further below) suggests that ἐσχάτη ὥρα here means primarily that period of time, whether shorter or longer, which will usher in the termination of all time as we know it. For this reason we have adopted the translation, “the final hour.” (The eschatological associations belonging to the term ὥρα, “hour,” are familiar to us from John’s Gospel, e.g. John 2:4; 4:23; 16:2; cf. also Luke 22:53. Nevertheless, the exact phrase ἐσχάτη ὥρα occurs in the NT only here.)

Thus the writer sees his generation living in the final days before the second coming of Christ. For him the evidence of this, “From this we know that it is the last hour” (ὅθεν γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν), was the presence of many antichrists active already at the close of the first Christian century.

Was the writer wrong? In one sense, yes, he was, since some two thousand years have passed since this was written. But in another sense, no, he was right. The time between the first and second comings of Christ do stand as the ‘last days’ in God’s timetable of human history. The early Christians lived in sensitive awareness of this and then lived expecting that second coming of our Lord to just be around the corner. In this he reflects a model for each generation of believers to adopt in their expectancy



of the return of Christ.

2) *The coming of the antichrist.* The writer mentions that by his day a general theological teaching was that an antichrist is coming. The singular form of ἀντίχριστος alludes to a major figure, either human or supernatural. Again, Steven Smalley (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) comments on the absence of the Greek article for ‘the’ in the original wording:

Some witnesses, including ⋈ A K L, introduce the definite article ὁ (“the” before ἀντίχριστος, “antichrist” (but ⋈* B C, et al. omit). The absence of the article indicates not only that the concept symbolized by ἀντίχριστος had by now become personalized (cf. 2 Thess 2:1-12; also ἀντίχριστοι, “antichrists,” in this v), but also that the term itself had passed into current (technical) use as a proper name (so Westcott, 70). The later addition of the article is thus gratuitous, and possibly reflects an attempt to sharpen the reference to antichrist in this context by making it even more specific (cf. ⋈ IV, which translates ἀντίχριστος as “the antichrist”; ⋈ B has “an Antichrist”).

In the background lies intertestamental Judaism that developed the concept of not only God’s anointed Messiah, but also of the emergence of one who would vigorously oppose Him.¹ Also stands Paul’s emphasis on the “man of lawlessness” as this figure in 2 Thess. 2:1-12.² To this general backdrop the

¹See Ezek 38:2-3; Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Zech 14:2; 1 Enoch 90:16; 2 Esdras 13:5.

²NRSV. 1 As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here.

3 Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. 4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? 6 And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, 10 and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a

writer alludes here. This will serve as the basis of his next contention of the presence of many antichrists already in his day. It is important to remember that only in the Johannine writings of the New Testament is the term 'antichrist' used.

3) *The presence of many antichrists aready.* Whether *the* Antichrist would be a human or supernatural figure to this writer is unclear. But it is clear that the many antichrists referenced here are humans, who at one time identified with the communities of faith in Ephesus. Thus the concept of one who opposes Christ, inherent in the word 'antichrist,' is extended to include individuals who by their belief and actions oppose Christ and the apostolic gospel message. And the writer knew numerous individuals who fit this description.

Smalley (*WBC*) provides helpful comments here:

When John claims that antichrist has arrived in the form of many antichrists (and note the elliptical construction of the Gr. at this point, where the sentence is introduced by καθώς, "as"; cf. v 27), he is saying in the first place that, as in the tradition, actual *opponents* of Jesus ("anti-Messiahs") have appeared (cf. Houlden, 77). Such people, *antichrists*, are resisting Jesus the *Christ* (see v 22). But almost certainly an ambivalence is contained in the term αντίχριστος (cf. the cognate ἀντιστράτηγος, meaning "opposing general" or "propraetor"). For *false prophecy* is often associated with the appearance of an "antichrist" figure in the NT (cf. Mark 13:22; 1 Cor 12:3; Rev 16:13; 19:20; 20:10; also John 5:43). It is likely, therefore, that John also has in mind here *deceivers* (cf. 2 John 7); those who by propagating false views of Jesus are actually opposing him (cf. Westcott, 70). They are not pretending to be Christ, unlike the ψευδόχριστοι ("false Christs") of Mark 13:22 par.; but their inadequate estimate of his person amounts to an anti-Christian attitude, and a perversion of Christianity (cf. Law, *Tests*, 320-22; note also the association of the "man of lawlessness" with both deceit and opposition at 2 Thess 2:3, 4).

Who were these αντίχριστοι, and what was their teaching? Clearly John regards the heretical secessionists from his community as "antichrists"; and he sees the erroneous christology of these professed believers (whose character has been in view since 1:5) as both dangerous for the life and unity of the church (cf. v 19), and a mark of the arrival of the

powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, 12 so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.

end-time. One form of this christological error was presumably docetism: an emphasis on the divinity of Jesus, at the expense of his humanity (cf. 2 John 7); the deceiver and antichrist is the person who does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as ἐρχόμενον ἐν σαρκί "come in flesh" (but see the comment on that v). Perhaps this heresy is also in mind when John refers elsewhere to antichrist(s). But there is nothing contained in those further references (1 John 2:18, 22 and 4:3) which excludes the possibility that John is also thinking of heretics whose inclination was the reverse: to stress the humanity of Jesus, at the expense of his divinity. In this passage, we may conclude, there is no way of determining the precise nature of the heretical extreme which the antichrists in John's circle were espousing. It was a christological error; but it could have been either too "high" or too "low" in character. (See further on 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7; also the introduction, xxiii-iv. Cf. also Smalley, "What about 1 John?" 338-40.)

Their disassociating themselves from the believing communities of faith, v. 19: "They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us" (ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν, μεμενήκεισαν ἂν μεθ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν.). For the writer the decisive indicator of the antichrist orientation of these individuals was their formal disassociation from the communities of believers. A part of the nuance of the Greek play on the preposition ἐκ (ek) in the four uses of it cannot be translated into English easily. The phrase "not of us" [NRSV, 'did not belong to us'] conveys through the Greek ablative case with the preposition the sense of not sharing the same source. Clearly implicit is the contention that these people were not born of the



Father, as were those in the believing communities (cf. Jhn 1:13). Thus their physical separation from the believing communities made clear their spiritual bankruptcy down inside.

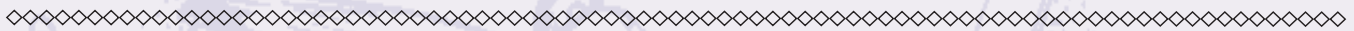
Exactly what is meant by “They went out from us” (ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν)? Did they move down the block and start a competing church? Clearly they did not abandon a formal claim to being Christian, although John is not willing to concede that they are genuine believers. They continue trying to influence believers in the Christian communities to adopt their views over against the apostolic teaching of the gospel. Given the first century reality that the believing community was made up of numerous house church groups meeting in separate homes all over ancient Ephesus, one can readily see the “going out from” action as simply setting up alternative house church groups and then seeking to entice those in the authentic communities to come join them in their meetings.

John is convinced that had they been genuine

believers they would have remained a part of the believing community. That they didn’t sheds light on their true spiritual condition before God.

How do these two verses relate to us today?

A few things come to mind. First, the presence of individuals who oppose Christ either by twisted theology and / or by immoral behavior while claiming to be Christian should not surprise us. For the writer of 1 John, distorted belief about Christ, especially when coupled with questionable behavior, makes one an ‘antichrist.’ Refusal to formally identify with the authentic believing community reflects this bankrupt spiritual condition. A casual listening to radio or TV preachers brings dramatic illustration of such antichrists! We need to note them for who they genuinely are: people who by belief and action oppose Christ and thus reflect a false theology. Even though such ‘labeling’ isn’t popular in our culture, it becomes necessary if we are to protect ourselves against their corrupting influence.



b. Divine anointing, vv. 20-25

Greek NT

2:20 καὶ ὑμεῖς
 χρῖσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁ-
 γίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες.
 2:21 οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι
 οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἀλήθειαν
 ἀλλ’ ὅτι οἴδατε αὐτὴν
 καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ
 τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν.
 2:22 Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψευ-
 ᾽στης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος
 ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ
 Χριστός· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ
 ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρνου-
 ᾽μενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν
 υἱόν. 2:23 πᾶς ὁ ἀρνου-
 ᾽μενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν
 πατέρα ἔχει, ὁ ὁμολογῶν
 τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα
 ἔχει. 2:24 ὑμεῖς ὁ ἠκου-
 ᾽σατε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν
 μενέτω. ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν
 μείνη ὁ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ἠκου-
 ᾽σατε, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ υἱῷ
 καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μενεῖτε.
 2:25 καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ
 ἐπαγγελία ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπη-
 γγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν
 τὴν αἰώνιον.

NASB

20 But you have an
 anointing from the Holy
 One, and you all know.
 21 I have not written to
 you because you do not
 know the truth, but be-
 cause you do know it,
 and because no lie is
 of the truth. 22 Who is
 the liar but the one who
 denies that Jesus is the
 Christ? This is the anti-
 christ, the one who de-
 nies the Father and the
 Son. 23 Whoever de-
 nies the Son does not
 have the Father; the one
 who confesses the Son
 has the Father also. 24
 As for you, let that abide
 in you which you heard
 from the beginning. If
 what you heard from the
 beginning abides in you,
 you also will abide in the
 Son and in the Father.
 25 This is the promise
 which He Himself made
 to us: eternal life.

NASB

20 But you have
 been anointed by the
 Holy One, and all of you
 have knowledge. 21
 I write to you, not be-
 cause you do not know
 the truth, but because
 you know it, and you
 know that no lie comes
 from the truth. 22 Who
 is the liar but the one
 who denies that Jesus
 is the Christ? This is the
 antichrist, the one who
 denies the Father and
 the Son. 23 No one who
 denies the Son has the
 Father; everyone who
 confesses the Son has
 the Father also. 24 Let
 what you heard from the
 beginning abide in you.
 If what you heard from
 the beginning abides in
 you, then you will abide
 in the Son and in the
 Father. 25 And this is
 what he has promised
 us, eternal life.

NASB

20 But you are not like
 that, for the Holy Spirit has
 come upon you, and all
 of you know the truth. 21
 So I am writing to you not
 because you don’t know
 the truth but because
 you know the difference
 between truth and false-
 hood. 22 And who is the
 great liar? The one who
 says that Jesus is not the
 Christ. Such people are
 antichrists, for they have
 denied the Father and
 the Son. 23 Anyone who
 denies the Son doesn’t
 have the Father either.
 But anyone who confess-
 es the Son has the Father
 also. 24 So you must re-
 main faithful to what you
 have been taught from
 the beginning. If you do,
 you will continue to live
 in fellowship with the Son
 and with the Father. 25
 And in this fellowship we
 enjoy the eternal life he
 promised us.

Notes:

Internally the thought flow of these verses moves in a twofold pattern from an affirmation of his readers (vv. 20-23) to an admonition of them (vv. 24-25). The stack poles around which the affirmation and admonition are given is the ‘anointing’ (χρῖσμα) and the understanding of the apostolic gospel as divine truth (ἀληθεία). John affirms that his readers already possess the truth because they have been given the *chrisma*, the anointing. On the other hand, the antichrists don’t possess the truth because they do not have the *chrisma*. Thus the writer encourages his readers to remain in the truth that they already possess, since it is the only way to the divine promise of life eternal.

Thus clear understanding of his affirmation and admonition depends on clear understanding of the two key terms in these verses.

1) The Anointing. What is this? The Greek says simply χρῖσμα. The word comes from the verb χρίω, which means to anoint. Out of this word comes a number of other words in the New Testament: χριστός (Christ), ἀντίχριστος (antichrist), χρῖσμα (anointing), χριστιανός (Christian). This realization of word groupings is important to grasping the play on words permeating the entire passage. Thus the χρῖσμα is closely linked to Christ, and the antichrists do not possess it since they oppose Christ.



Inside our text the χρῖσμα is described in a variety of ways. It is something that teaches (διδάσκει) and remains (μένει). It is something John’s readers possess (ἔχετε). They have received it from Christ (ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ), and it belongs to Christ (αὐτοῦ).

What then is the χρῖσμα? These two aspects -- etymology and context -- argue strongly for an identification with the Holy Spirit. Walter Grundmann (*Kittel’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Logos Systems) notes this:

When the community is assaulted by antichrists it can resist only in the power of the Spirit, the χρῖσμα, 2:20, 27. The use of this term, which means “anointing oil,” implies that the community is anointed with the Spirit, this being the basis of the fact that it belongs to Christ. χρῖσμα imparts to the community its comprehensive knowledge — οἶδατε πάντα (2:20)³

³ We accept the reading οἶδατε πάντα A C Ḅ at sy^h and not πάντες B ᶜ, since the latter is a softening of the all-embracing

— which confers on it the clarity of faith and judgment and the assurance in life and decision that come from its relationship to God. This statement about the χρῖσμα of the community is directly connected with what Christ says about the παράκλητος (→ V, 813, 1 ff.) in Jn. 16:8–10, 13 f. The community has received the χρῖσμα as a power which remains in it and gives it comprehensive and reliable instruction, 2:27.⁴ A notable feature in the ecclesiastical situation in which the Johannine Epistles were written is that the author does not refer the community to an authoritative teaching office but reminds it of its reception of the χρῖσμα which is itself the teacher (→ II, 143, 19 ff.) and which makes the community independent of a teaching office: τὸ αὐτοῦ χρῖσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, 2:27.⁵ This shows how strongly in John the understanding of the Messiah is determined by the anointing of the Spirit and how the relation between the Son and sons, which is based on reception of the Spirit, finds an echo in the connection between the anointed One and the anointed.

We can confidently conclude that the χρῖσμα is closely linked to the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised in John 16:8-10. His presence in the community of believers is what enables them to understand the truth, and to resist the influence of these antichrists with their false teaching.

2) The Truth. What is truth? This famous question in western history has mostly been defined for centuries by the ideas of the Greek philosopher [Aristotle](#). For him truth lay in the consistency between the visible and invisible domains of existence as taught in the [dualism](#) by the philosopher [Plato](#), and truth was an abstract idea derived from the validation of something being consistent with ultimate reality, which lay in the invisible. Truth, ἀλήθεια, defined in scripture

πάντα.

⁴The grammatical structure of this difficult statement is probably as follows: “And you! The chrisma which you have received from him remains in you and you have no need that any should teach you. But as his chrisma teaches you about all things, it is reliable and without any lie, and, as it has taught you, abide in it.” Cf. Jn. 14:17: τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν, and 14:26: ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν ἐγώ. C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, MNTC (1946), 63 describes χρῖσμα as “knowledge ... against the poison of false teaching.” Cf. Schnckbg. J.⁴ on 1 Jn. 2:20.

⁵The question whether αὐτοῦ relates to the Father or the Son does not allow of any clear-cut answer. As in Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26 it may relate to either. The ambivalence reflects the unity of the Father and the Son, though cf. Schnckbg. J.⁴, 161.

rests on the foundation of John 14:6 where Jesus declared ἐγὼ εἰμι... ἡ ἀλήθεια (“I am the Truth”). In so identifying Himself with the Father, we know what is true is that which comes from Christ. This, because He perfectly reflects God who is the very manifestation of truth. Thus in the NT, what is true is what corresponds to Christ because He reflects the Heavenly Father in character and in spiritual reality. In our text the truth had been taught to the community by the Holy Spirit, but it had also been heard by the community through the preaching of it by the apostolic leaders who had been in Ephesus, such as Paul and John.

The opposite of truth is what is false (ψεῦδος). In this context it refers to what the antichrists were teaching, which is defined as refusal to confess Jesus as Christ. By their denial of Him who is Truth, they expose their ideas as a lie.

The Affirmation. In vv. 20-23, the writer affirms that his readers possess the teaching presence of the Holy Spirit, i.e., the *χρῖσμα*. This has brought them full exposure to divine truth and through His presence provides them insight into what is true and what is false.

On the other hand, the antichrists were denying Jesus as the Christ. Exactly what this implied is not totally clear. Most are convinced that the declaration in 4:2-3 provides important details:

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world.

Very possibly the writer was dealing with an early form of [docetic Christianity](#). In its later expression at least, the contention was made that Jesus was not a real flesh and blood human being, that he only seemed⁶ to be one. Thus these antichrists had come to the conclusion that Jesus was pure deity and thus could not have ever taken on actual human existence. A strong Greek influence out of [Platonic dualism](#) lies behind such thinking.

But the denial of Jesus as the divinely anointed Messiah, i.e., the Son of God, as affirmed in 2:22, could suggest that they were having trouble fully accepting the deity of Jesus, the man. Thus they could very well have denied the deity of Christ and left Jesus in their thinking as merely a prophet or a exemplary teacher of divine wisdom.

⁶The term ‘docetism’ is derived from the Greek verb *δοκέω* (dokeo), which can mean “to seem to be something.”

The Johannine text is sending mixed signals about the historical identity of these antichrists. And thus we must exercise caution in projecting possible heretical groups at the close of the first Christian century as potential candidates for these people called here antichrists.

One thing is clear, however. These opposers to Christ had a twisted understanding of who the Lord is. Instead of maintaining the apostolic stance affirming the full deity and the full humanity of Christ at the same time, these individuals had opted for one or the other emphases to the exclusion of the other. Their warped view of Jesus was enough to exclude them from authentic relationship with Him.

The Admonition. In vv. 24-25, the writer issues a plea for his readers to stand fast (*μενέτω, μείνη, μενεῖτε*) in the apostolic preaching of the Gospel that they had heard from the beginning of their Christian pilgrimage. To take such an ongoing stance reflects continued existence in both Christ and the Heavenly Father. The background of Jesus’ teaching on the vine and the branches in Jhn. 10:1-6 looms large in the background. What is at stake here? The promise of life eternal. And their participation in that promise.

What can we learn from these verses? When Christ saved us, the Holy Spirit came into our life bringing not only salvation but the full resources of God. Every believer has been anointed by God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is not some ‘second blessing’ or experience that believers should seek after becoming Christians. To move this way is to demean and belittle the richness of salvation in Christ.

We have been given the potential of fully grasping the implications of that salvation. The Spirit indwelling us teaches us the Gospel, that is, “what you have heard.” The content of this is preserved in what we call the New Testament, and through the help of the Holy Spirit we can grasp increasingly the richness of this Gospel.

Thus we don’t need screw ball preachers injecting their own man made ideas into the content of the Gospel. The result of this is twisting and distorting the picture of Jesus painted in the New Testament. Salvation comes exclusively through spiritual connection to the Jesus of the New Testament, and is not possible through some twisted version of Him concocted by human thinking.

Thus we must be careful to always teach the biblical Jesus as the centerpiece of an authentic Gospel message!

c. Defending against deceivers, vv. 26-27

Greek NT

2:26 Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανῶντων ὑμᾶς. 2:27 καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρῖσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, μένει ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρῖσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.

NASB

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. 27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

NRSV

26 I write these things to you concerning those who would deceive you. 27 As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him.

NLT

26 I have written these things to you because you need to be aware of those who want to lead you astray. 27 But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you all things, and what he teaches is true – it is not a lie. So continue in what he has taught you, and continue to live in Christ.

Notes:

This final segment of our passage somewhat summarizes his discussion up to this point. In the typical writing style of this author he can freely return to previous themes in repetition, and sometimes then to extend the ideas a bit further than in the previous mentioning of them.

He alludes again to the antichrists and now calls them deceivers, τῶν πλανῶντων ὑμᾶς.⁷ They are attempting to lead astray the believing community at Ephesus. Thus, although they have disassociated themselves from the community, they continue seeking to influence members of the community into their group.

John reiterates the anointing of the Holy Spirit that the community had received. Now τὸ χρῖσμα has been received from Christ Himself: ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. The Holy Spirit stands as their teacher and

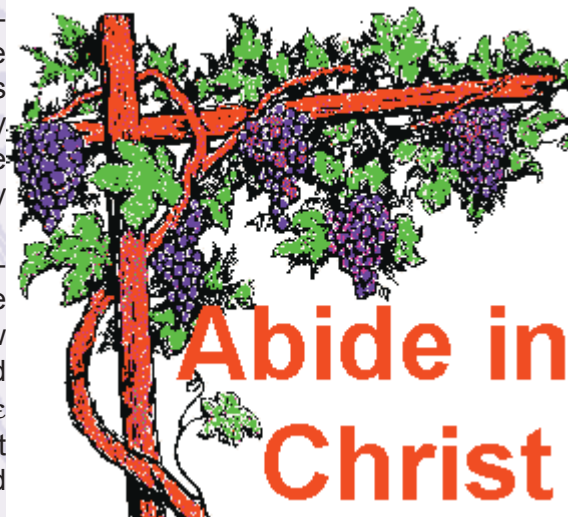
thus excludes any legitimate teaching from these deceivers. The readers weren't going to learn anything valid from these people. Instead, what they would receive from the Holy Spirit was true and not false, like that from the deceivers.

John closes this section with a repeat of his admonition for his readers to stand firm in the gospel message and in the Holy Spirit just as they had been doing in the past. From conversion until the present the Holy Spirit had taught them everything they needed to understand about their salvation and relationship with God through Christ. Thus he admonishes them to continue in Christ along those very same lines.

What can we learn here? First and foremost, authentic Christian faith must be centered in a biblical Jesus. In a theological stance that sees Jesus as both fully divine and fully human at the same time.

Anything less is not a Jesus who saves.

Also, we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit desperately helping us understand the witness of the apostles in the New Testament. Finally, we need to identify and disassociate ourselves from every preacher / teacher who presents a twisted view of Jesus.



⁷The present tense Greek participle πλανῶντων is handled variously by the three translators above, all of which are legitimate: NASB, “who are trying to deceive you”; NRSV, “who would deceive you”; and NLT, “who want to lead you astray”. Contextual signals strongly suggest that these false teachers weren't making any inroads into the believing community. But the participle here implies deliberate efforts at doing so.

Greek NT

2:18 Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν, ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν. 2:19 ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν, μεμενήκεισαν ἄν μεθ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν. 2:20 καὶ ὑμεῖς χρισμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες. 2:21 οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀλλ' ὅτι οἴδατε αὐτὴν καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν. 2:22 Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν. 2:23 πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει. 2:24 ὑμεῖς ὁ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω. ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη ὁ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μενεῖτε. 2:25 καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.

2:26 Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανῶντων ὑμᾶς. 2:27 καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρισμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, μένει ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ

NASB

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. 27 As for you, the anointing which you received from

NRSV

18 Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us. 20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge. 21 I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and you know that no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he has promised us, eternal life.

26 I write these things to you concerning those who would deceive you. 27 As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone

NLT

18 Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the end of the world has come. 19 These people left our churches because they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left us, it proved that they do not belong with us. 20 But you are not like that, for the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and all of you know the truth. 21 So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and falsehood. 22 And who is the great liar? The one who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Such people are antichrists, for they have denied the Father and the Son. 23 Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father either. But anyone who confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will continue to live in fellowship with the Son and with the Father. 25 And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us.

26 I have written these things to you because you need to be

οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.

Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him.

aware of those who want to lead you astray. 27 But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you all things, and what he teaches is true – it is not a lie. So continue in what he has taught you, and continue to live in Christ.

Greek NT Diagram

- 1 ^{2:18} Παιδιά,
ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν,
καὶ
καθὼς ἠκούσατε
ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται,
καὶ νῦν
2 ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γέγονασιν,
ὅθεν γινώσκομεν
ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.
- 3 ^{2:19} ἐξ ἡμῶν
ἐξῆλθαν
ἀλλ'
4 οὐκ ἦσαν
ἐξ ἡμῶν·
γὰρ
5 εἰ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν,
μεμενήκεισαν ἂν
μεθ' ἡμῶν·
ἀλλ'
6 (ἐξῆλθαν)
ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν
ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες
ἐξ ἡμῶν.
- 7 ^{2:20} καὶ
ὕμεις χρῖσμα ἔχετε
ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου
καὶ
8 οἴδατε πάντες.
- 9 ^{2:21} οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν
ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἀλήθειαν
ἀλλ'
10 (ἔγραψα ὑμῖν)
ὅτι οἴδατε αὐτὴν
καὶ
ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν.
- 11 ^{2:22} Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης
εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος
ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός·
12 οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος,
ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν.
- 13 ^{2:23} πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱόν
οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει,
14 ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱόν
καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.

15 ^{2:24} ὑμεῖς ὁ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς,
ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω.

ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη
καὶ ὁ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε,
καὶ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ
16 ὑμεῖς...μενεῖτε.

^{2:25} καὶ
17 αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία
ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν,
τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.

18 ^{2:26} Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν
περὶ τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς.

^{2:27} καὶ
19 τὸ χρῖσμα...μένει ἐν ὑμῖν
ὑμεῖς...ὁ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτούς,
καὶ
20 οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε
ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς,
ἀλλ'
ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρῖσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων
καὶ
ἀληθές ἐστίν
καὶ
οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος,
καὶ
καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς,
21 μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.

Semantic Diagram

		Παιδία (v.18)						
	1-----	1	Pres	---	Ind	3	S	ώρα
A--								καὶ
	2-----	2	Perf	Act	Ind	3	S	ἀντίχρισται
								--- (v.19)
I--	a-----	3	2 Aor	Act	Ind	3	P	(αὐτοί)
	1--							ἀλλ'
	b-----	4	Imperf	Act	Ind	3	P	(αὐτοί)
B--								γάρ
	a-----	5	Perf	Act	Ind	3	P	(αὐτοί)
	2--							ἀλλ'
	b-----	6	(2 Aor	Act	Ind	3	P	αὐτοί)
								καὶ (v.20)
	i---	7	Pres	Act	Ind	2	P	ὕμεῖς
	a--							καὶ
	ii--	8	Perf	Act	Ind	2	P	(ὕμεῖς)
	1--							--- (v.21)
	i---	9	1 Aor	Act	Ind	1	S	(ἐγὼ)
	b--							ἀλλ'
	ii--	10	(1 Aor	Act	Ind	1	S	ἐγὼ)
A--								--- (v.22)
	i---	11	Pres	---	Ind	3	S	Τίς
	a--							---
	ii--	12	Pres	---	Ind	3	S	οὗτος
	2--							--- (v.23)
	i---	13	Pres	Act	Ind	3	S	πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος
II--	b--							---
	ii--	14	Pres	Act	Ind	3	S	ὁ ὁμολογῶν
								--- (v.24)
	a-----	15	Pres	Act	Imp+ 3	S	S	ὁ ἠκούσατε
	1--							καὶ
B--	b-----	16	Pres	Act	Ind	2	P	ὕμεῖς
								καὶ (v.25)
	2-----	17	Pres	---	Ind	3	S	αὕτη
								--- (v.26)
A-----	1 Aor	18	Act	Ind	1	S	(ἐγὼ)	
III--								καὶ (v.27)
	1-----	19	Pres	Act	Ind	3	S	τὸ χρῖσμα
B--								καὶ
	a-----	20	Pres	Act	Ind	2	P	(ὕμεῖς)
	2--							ἀλλ'
	b-----	21	Pres	Act	Imp+ 2	P	P	(ὕμεῖς)

Summary of Rhetorical Structure

The internal structure of the ideas inside verses 18-27 divide out into three basic groupings, although they could possibly be grouped into two subdivisions. The Johannine running style of thought expression makes analysis more difficult. Detecting clearly defined progression of thought is the more challenging aspect.

The first division (vv. 18-19; #s 1-6) focus on the antichrists whom the writers contends have already distanced themselves from the apostolic communities of faith. Thus they reflect false profession of faith and their true colors have surfaced with their departure.

The second division (vv. 20-25; #s 7-17) focus on the readers with the contention that their divine anointing (χρῖσμα) has provided them the correct understanding of the Gospel and thus eliminates any need of further instruction by these antichrists. This unit subdivides into two smaller unites: vv. 20-21 (#s. 7-10) and vv. 22-25 (#s 11-17) with statement 17 standing as the climatic declaration. In the first subunit the writer contents they have all they need from the gift of the Holy Spirit in conversion, the χρῖσμα. In the second subunit, those denying Jesus stand as the antichrist and possess no salvation. This in spite of their claim to be Christian teachers. The writer admonishes his readers to continue in the truth of the gospel which they had heard preached from conversion. He then concludes with the divine promise of eternal life that is found in the apostolic gospel message.

The third division (vv. 26-27; #s 19-20) alludes to these antichrists as deceivers who have sought to lead the believers astray. The writer focuses on the complete adequacy of the divine anointing, the χρῖσμα, as their source of understanding the true gospel message. They have been steadfast in this message, and the writer encourages them to continue in it firmly, just as they have already been taught by authentic Christian leaders.