

1 John

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish

April 14, 2021



1 John 2:18

Vss.18-19

- The idea of the “last hour” is not unique to John. It runs throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament usually we find the phrase “last days”. We see this in Genesis 49 where Jacob is speaking with his sons about what is to come in the last days. Here it is not a time of dread but a time of rejoicing in the Promised Land! We see it often in the prophets where they speak of the total supremacy of God on the earth and of Israel’s full obedience. In the Old Testament and in the writings during the 300+ years between the testaments, the last days and last hours came to be directly associated with the Day of the Lord. The Jews divided time into The Present Age and The Age to Come and the turning point at the divide was the Day of the Lord. This came to be seen as a day of judgement and terror, all of which was to be understood as the necessary birth pains of The Age to Come. So the “last hour” does not mean some final cataclysmic destruction where all is returned to the nothingness before creation. Rather we are to understand the term as when old things pass away and all things are made new.
- So given that nearly 2000 years have passed since John wrote, many are quick to ask, “Was John wrong?” Well no, John wasn’t wrong, not by how he understood the term. The Son of God had come bringing with Him the Kingdom of God. He had overcome death and the grave and was raised to eternal life. All history pivots on that point. He gave His disciples a commission to go into all the world during the last hour/ last days and baptize and make disciples and we are still working on that. John and his people had no way of knowing how big the world really was. Fulfilling Jesus’ commission was going to take more than one or two generations! And as to

THE end, John knew well that Jesus had said repeatedly that only the Father knew the hour and that the responsibility of the Father's servants was to always be ready.

- The antichrist and antichrists: In Greek, the term "antichrist" may mean an opponent of Christ or it may mean one who places himself in the place of Christ where the antichrist is quietly, subversively working within the church to supersede Christ as the head of the church. There is thus no need to pick between the two definitions. Simply put, Christ is the incarnation of God, filled with God's goodness and love. The antichrist is the incarnation of Satan, filled with Satan's evil and hate.
- This is why John uses the plural. There had already been a variety of people who could make a case to be the antichrist. One of the Greek kings of Syria, following the death of Alexander the Great, planted a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies in the Great Temple in Jerusalem, turned the Temple into a brothel and slaughtered thousands of Jews. The Roman emperor Caligula had a statue of himself placed in the Holy of Holies. And Nero was in such a class by himself that even the Romans believed he may not really be dead but resurrected and alive in Parthia, ready to sweep through the eastern empire, slaughtering Christians as he goes.
- But for John, he sees the antichrists on a more personal level as he considers his churches and the threats to them. He is not so concerned about the outside antichrists as those on the inside, the Gnostics and others who are leading people astray. In Mark 13:5b-6, Jesus says, "See to it that no one misleads you. Many will come in My name saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many." Paul warned the new Ephesian church in Acts 20:29-30 about how "wolves" will come into their church without sparing the flock and was furious with the "foolish Galatians" and how they could let themselves be misled (Galatians chapters 1 & 3).
- For John and the other New Testament writers, the battle was truly not against flesh and blood, for this was a battle of heart and mind: what do you truly believe and what are you willing to mentally accept as Truth? The battle was between dark principalities and powers on the one side and God

and His kingdom on the other. And the battle still rages. It may shift from one theater of conflict to another, but it is all the same battle. Warfare in the jungle differs from house-to-house warfare in a city which differs from submarine warfare, but its all the same war. So in John's time there were the Gnostics. There are still variations of that heresy alive and well in our churches still today: live however you want to live just love God and be nice. We also contend with non-theistic secularists who demand that their views on science and education and government are the only views to be accepted. God is not invited to participate in any public forum whatsoever. The Germans had Hitler. The Russians has Stalin. The Chinese had Mao. Americans have the Freedom From Religion organization who gladly take the label antichrist.

- The battle is real. Its in our churches. It's in our homes. It is the air we breath and the water we drink...and its way past time the church woke up.