

The Last Hour

1 John 2:18-27

WHAT WE FOUND

John surprised us: "antichrist" is not first a movie villain but a present plural. "Many antichrists have come," and the test is Christological: "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?" (2:22). The Church still expects a final trial before the Lord returns, but John's warning is for every age, including ours: every reduction of Jesus to less than the Christ come in the flesh carries that spirit.

We sat with the letter's most sobering sentence: "They went out from us, but they were not of us" (2:19). Departure revealed a rupture it did not create. And we found the hidden wordplay: *Christos*, *antichristos*, *chrisma*. You have been anointed by the Holy One (2:20), the same Spirit-conferring anointing David received (1 Samuel 16:13), given to you in baptism and sealed in confirmation.

"You have no need that any one should teach you" (2:27) turned out to be Jeremiah's New Covenant promise fulfilled, "they shall all know me" (Jeremiah 31:34), the Spirit teaching every believer from within. John wrote it, delightfully, inside a letter that teaches. The anointing within and the apostolic teachers without are one Spirit, and our task is his great verb: abide.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Irenaeus of Lyons *Against Heresies, Book III*

Irenaeus, disciple of St. Polycarp who himself knew John, quotes this very passage against teachers who split the man Jesus from the divine Christ. Those who deny that the Christ has come in the flesh, he writes, are the ones the apostle warned of, and the Church's answer is the faith received from the apostles and guarded in unbroken succession.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyprian of Carthage *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*

Cyprian applies "they went out from us" to the schismatics of his own century and distills the lesson into his famous maxim: he cannot have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his mother. For Cyprian, unity is not optional equipment for the Christian life; it is the life itself, and tearing it is the devil's oldest countermove against the Gospel.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine *Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Homily 3*

Augustine preaches that there are many antichrists because everyone who denies Christ by his manner of life contradicts the Anointed One. And on the anointing he turns inward: the sound of a teacher's words strikes the ear from outside, he says, but the Master who makes those words live is within, the Spirit himself

teaching the heart what no human voice alone could.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1.

Pray daily this week, by name, for one person who "went out," with hope and not a verdict. Just their name and mercy.

2.

Renew your confirmation: find the date if you can, thank God for your chrism, and pray "Come, Holy Spirit" every morning this week when your feet hit the floor.

3.

Read the Nicene Creed slowly once this week and underline every phrase John's opponents would have denied. Count them.

MEMORY VERSE

"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." (1 John 2:24, RSV2CE)

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read **1 John 2:28-3:10**. Keep the second blank sealed. As you read, mark every occurrence of *children*, and sit for a moment with 3:1 before moving on.

Catechism Connection: CCC 91-93; 675-677; 695