

As in the Days of Noah
(Living Faithfully While Awaiting the King's Return)
“The Spirit of Antichrist”
October 4, 2026
Pastor David Bardowell

“This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” (1 John 4:3, NIV)

Big Idea:

The greatest protection against deception is knowing the true Christ.

Kingdom Response:

Grow in discernment and help others know Jesus.

Series Heartbeat:

The return of Christ is not an escape from the mission—it is the motivation for the mission.

I. Faithful Disciple-Makers

(1 John 2:18-23; Revelation 13:1-10)

“I have not written to you because you don’t know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth.” (1 John 2:21, CSB)

“Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son.” (1 John 2:22, CSB)

Key Truth:

The better we know the true Christ, the easier it becomes to recognize a counterfeit Christ.

II. Faithful Disciple-Makers

John 4:1-6)

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1, ESV)

“This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming; even now it is already in the world.” (1 John 4:2–3, CSB)

Key Truth:

Biblical discernment is not the ability to be suspicious of everything—it is the ability to recognize what is true.

III. Faithful Disciple-Makers

(1 John 4:4-6)

“You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4, CSB)

“We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us; anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.” (1 John 4:6, CSB)

Key Truth:

Disciple-making doesn't merely expose people to the truth—it helps people know the One who is Truth.

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Small Group Questions — Week 4

The Spirit of Antichrist

Texts: 1 John 2:18–23; 4:1–6; Matthew 24:23–25

Start Here — Reflective Question

When you hear the word **Antichrist**, what immediately comes to mind? Why do you think Christians can sometimes become more interested in identifying the Antichrist than in knowing Christ?

Read the Passage

Have someone read **1 John 2:18–23 and 4:1–6** aloud before discussion.

As you listen, notice what John says about the Antichrist, the “spirit of the antichrist,” spiritual deception, and how believers can recognize what is true.

Discussion Questions

1. KNOW THE TRUE CHRIST — 1 John 2:18–23

John says that the Antichrist is coming, but he also says that “even now many antichrists have come.”

At the center of John's warning is the identity of Jesus. The spirit of antichrist denies or distorts the truth about who Jesus really is.

- Why do you think John makes the **identity of Jesus** the central issue in recognizing spiritual deception?
- What are some ways people today redefine Jesus rather than completely reject Him?
- Why can a distorted version of Jesus be more spiritually dangerous than simply rejecting Jesus altogether?
- How does knowing the true Christ help us recognize a counterfeit?

2. TEST THE SPIRITS — 1 John 4:1–3

John tells believers: “**Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God.**”

Not everything that sounds spiritual comes from God. Jesus also warned that false messiahs and false prophets would arise and deceive people.

- What do you think it means practically to “**test the spirits**”?
- Why are people sometimes persuaded by something because it sounds spiritual, powerful, popular, or sincere?
- What questions should we ask when evaluating a teaching, spiritual claim, or cultural message?
- How can we become discerning without becoming cynical, suspicious, or fearful?

3. HELP OTHERS KNOW THE VOICE OF JESUS — 1 John 4:4–6

John gives believers confidence: “**The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.**”

Our confidence is not that we are smart enough to recognize every deception. We belong to Christ, we have His Word, and His Spirit lives within us.

- How does knowing that “the one who is in you is greater” change the way we respond to spiritual deception?
- Why is helping someone **know Jesus** more important than simply pointing out everything that is false?
- What role do Scripture and the Holy Spirit play in helping us recognize the voice of Jesus?
- What can we do personally to become more familiar with the voice and character of Christ?

Disciple-Making Connection

The Kingdom Response this week is: **Grow in discernment and help others know Jesus.**

- Why should spiritual conversations begin with listening—to the Holy Spirit and to the person—rather than immediately correcting what someone believes?
- What questions could you ask to discover what someone actually believes about Jesus?
- If someone has a distorted understanding of Jesus, how could you help them discover the biblical Jesus without turning the conversation into an argument?
- Who has God placed in your life who may be open to a conversation about Jesus this week?

Our job is not to convert. Our job is to converse—and trust the Holy Spirit with the results.

Series Heartbeat

Throughout this series we return to this truth: “**The return of Christ is not an escape from the mission—it is the motivation for the mission.**”

How does knowing that the spirit of antichrist is already at work create urgency for disciple-making without creating fear?

How can we become people who are so grounded in the true Christ that we can help others recognize and follow Him?