

Handout: 1 John Lesson 2

2:5 uses the Greek word *agape*, one of four Greek words for “love”:

1. *Agape* means spiritual love
2. *Phileo/philia* means brotherly love
3. *Eros* means sexual love
4. *Storge* means family love

The words *eros* and *storge* do not appear in the Greek translation of the Old Testament nor the New Testament. *Agape* speaks of the most powerful, noblest type of love: self-sacrificial love. *Agape* love is more than a feeling; it is an act of will. It is the love God has for His covenant people, and it is the love that prompted the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, for our sins. Jesus is *agape* love personified. Since Jesus called Christians are to love one another with *agape* love, Christians gave the word *agape* the distinctive meaning to love as Jesus’ loved in an unselfish, self-sacrificial love.

In 2:15-16, John urges his readers not to love the world or what it offers because everything worldly is in opposition to God. God created the world to be perfect and pure, but sin damaged the world when the human family rebelled against Him and surrendered to the devil (see 1 Jn 5:19). All things worldly became contaminated by sin that promotes selfish desires and unholy pursuits, feeding sensual lusts of the flesh, enticing the eyes with what only appears to be good but which leads a disordered, pretentious, and self-centered life. These were the temptations that enticed Adam to rebel against God. Satan tempted Jesus, the second Adam, with the same sins, but He resisted. Compare the temptations of Adam to the temptations of Jesus:

The Temptations of the World		
<i>Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world. 1 Jn 2:15-16</i>		
Temptations	The first Adam Genesis 3:1-6	Jesus, the new Adam Luke 4:1-13
The devil’s invitation to rebellion	<i>“Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees...?”</i>	<i>The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God ...”</i>
Hunger, a desire of the flesh	<i>The woman saw that the tree was good for food</i>	<i>command this stone to become bread”</i>
Enticement for the eyes:	<i>pleasing to the eyes, and</i>	<i>showed Him all the kingdoms of the world...</i>
The pride of a pretentious (boastful) life	<i>desirable for gaining wisdom</i>	<i>If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down ... for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you.”</i>
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18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that the antichrist was coming, so now many antichrists have appeared. In 2:18, the word *antichristos*, in English “antichrist” or “antichrists,” means one who stands in opposition to the *Christos/Christ*. It only appears five times in Scripture in 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3, 2 John 7, and a second time in the plural in 1 John 2:18. Throughout history, there have been many “antichrists” who attempted to sow disharmony in the Church, separating its members from the truth, and placing in jeopardy their salvation in Christ Jesus. The Church teaches there will be one final Antichrist when Satan attempts to wrench humanity out of the embrace of Mother Church. Of all the Biblical writers, only St. John names this evil entity as “Antichrist” and his agents as “antichrists.” In the Second Letter, John defines the antichrist and his agents: *Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh; such is the deceitful one and the antichrist* (2 Jn 7).

St. Paul refers to him as “the lawless one” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 and the Church tells us: “Before Christ’s second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the ‘mystery of iniquity’ in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh” (CCC 675, also see 676-77). The one Antichrist who will appear at the end of human history and all antichrists that come before him are agents of Satan.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, St. Paul describes the individual who will appear at the end of time to stand in opposition to God and His divine plan for humanity:

1. The lawless one desires to be revered and to receive the worship of humanity above the True God (verse 4).
2. At present, God restrains his appearance on the stage of human history until the appointed time when he will be revealed (verse 6).
3. The apostasy/rebellion of the lawless one is already at work (verse 7).
4. Satan is the origin of his power (verse 9).
5. God will reveal the lawless one, and Jesus will destroy him when He returns (verse 8).
6. The lawless one will deceive many (verse 11).
7. Those who believe the lawless one above God will be doomed to God’s divine judgment and condemnation (verse 12).

2:22 ~ Who is the liar? Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Whoever denies the Father and the Son, this is the antichrist.

The Antichrist and his agents will do four things:

1. The Antichrist will claim to be God.
2. He will deny that Jesus is the Messiah (Christos) sent by God to redeem humanity.
3. He will deny the union between the Father and the Son.
4. He will deny the Incarnation of God in the flesh.

Catechism citations # 452-480 and 2110-2113 refute all those assaults upon Christ by the Antichrist and his agents.

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