INTRODUCTION:  Jesus, in his famous Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24), said this in verses 4 & 5, “take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”

* John tells us why he is writing (v26) - “These things have I written unto you concerning them that would seduce or lead you astray.”
  Illustration: Jehovah Witnesses knocked on my door yesterday! (Jesus said “beware of wolves which come to you….)

* If we have the “Life that is Real”, if we know God; have fellowship with Him; walk in the Light; keep His word; we will not be lead astray!

* John has given us two tests so we can know the true from the false!
  1. The moral test – “of obedience” (v2:3)
  2. The social test – “of love” (v2:9)

* After a brief digression, warning us not to love the world, John comes back to his principal purpose; the discrimination between the true and the false by means of tests.

* He now gives us the Doctrinal Test (or belief). It concerns the person of Jesus!
  It’s the Christological test! (v22)
  Illustration: It’s because of the Gnostics false teaching about Jesus.

* This passage, like most of I John, defies a logical analysis. Yet, most give this section three divisions:

I. The Contrast – Between Deceivers and True Believers. (vv18-21)

A. John first, with his loving fatherly pastor’s heart, addresses his readers as “little children”.
  1. It’s the pastor’s job to warn God’s people!
  2. Note – “It is the last time” – What?
     a. The Church Age. (Hebrews 1:2; I Peter 1:20)
     b. The time just before the Lord’s coming! (v17)
     c. One Leader – “The Antichrist” (v18)
d. Only used by John!
   i. A person.
   ii. A spirit (v4:3)
   iii. False teachers – Gnostics!

e. The prevalence of Antichrist teachers is a sign of the last hour! (v18)
   Ron Rhodes, “The challenge of the Cults and New Religions” – Prior to 1850, cultists were practically unheard of in America. Today there are well over 20 million Americans involved in the cults and the occult. Some research suggests that among the cults and religious movements founded in the last 150 years, membership has escalated by up to 3,000 percent. A perusal of the contemporary religious scene makes it clear that the cults have truly taken advantage of the great American heritage of freedom of speech and religion to spread their unorthodox and, in some cases, dangerous doctrines.
   **Illustration:**
   * The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1830)
   * The Jehovah’s Witness (1870)
   * The United Church of Religious Science – founded by Ernest S. Holmes in 1927
   * The Unity School of Christianity – founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, 1891.
   * The New Age Movement – over 12 million Americans (it’s ancient Gnosticism)
   * The Church of Scientology
   * The Unification Church
   * The Baha’i Faith
   * Unitarian Universalism
   **In more recent times:**
   * The Davinci Code – by Dan Brown
   * The 3rd Jesus – by Deepak Chopra
   * A New Earth – by Eckhart Tolle

   Why? It’s the last days!
   1. The church’s failure to make doctrine a high priority.
   2. Breakdown in the family.
   3. A reaction against secular humanism.
   4. The turn to the East – 1960’s
   5. Increase in relativism
   7. Emphasis on feelings and experience.
   8. Effective use of the media.
f. Their relation to the people of God. (v19)
   i. Tares among the wheat. (Illustration: Judas)
   ii. It’s not true Christian that lost Salvation!
   iii. They had a false profession.
g. Contrast true believers (vv20-21)
   i. Literally, “and you all know” (all true believers).

II. The Content and Consequences of Deception (vv22-23)

A. John identifies the falsehood by asking a rhetorical question. (v22).
   1. Its literally “Who is the Liar?”
      a. Answer: “He that denieth that Jesus is the Christ.”
      b. What does that mean? “It’s in the present tense.”

B. List what you can’t deny about Jesus!
   1. If you do, note the serious consequences of a faulty Christology:
      a. You are Antichrist (v22b)
      b. You don’t have God the Father (v23)
   2. Why? Jesus is the only way to know God.
      a. Revelation – John 14:9
      b. Only way to God – John 14:6; also John 11:25, 6:47, 8:51, 15:14
      So, it’s no small thing!

Donald Burdick – Therefore the Gnostic heresy was not a minor theological disagreement: It struck at the person of Christ, the very heart of the Christian faith, destroying the only way by which man can enter saving fellowship with God. The same is true of such modern counterparts of Gnosticism as Christian Science, Unity, New Thought, and Unitarianism, all of which deny the actual incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity.

3. The positive statement (v23) – “He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also”

III. The Cure for Deception (vv24-28)

A. True Believers have a defense against deception!
   1. The Word of God (vv24-26)
      b. Its all the scriptures teach about Jesus! (See II Timothy 3:14-17)
   2. The Spirit of God (v20, v27)
      a. All believers have the Holy Spirit. (v20)
      b. The Priesthood of all believers. (v27)
   3. Abiding in God (v28)
      a. What is abiding?
*Jesus is coming, are you ashamed?

**Conclusion:**

1. Truth matters!
2. **As a Christian** you have a responsibility to know the truth.....
3. God has given us His Word, His Spirit!