



REAL CHRISTIANITY

Living in the Last Hour



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1 John 2:18-29 (20-23)

John is dealing with what seemed to be a confusing issue in the church.

Namely that people were departing from the church.

- Most likely it was the gnostic heresies that were deceiving people and causing them to abandon Christ.
- But whatever the reason, people who had once seemed to walk with Christ were now departing from Him.

We used that famous day recorded in John 6 when Jesus said He came from heaven and would head back there again and the Bible says that “many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore”

IT WAS A GREAT DEFECTION.

The church in John’s day was now seeing the same thing and it is apparent that it had confused them.

JOHN IS EXPLAINING TO THE CHURCH WHAT IS GOING ON.

And so we started out by looking at our first point:

1. SATAN’S SINISTER AGENDA

1 John 2:18-29

John quickly and concisely gave us the explanation as to why people were leaving.

Satan knows his time is short.

- He knows that at any moment Christ could return to crush his head.
- He’s running his “hurry up offense”
- He’s working to deceive and distort as frantically as he can.

Satan isn’t just waiting for one guy, he’s planting antichrists everywhere.

Someday, God will remove the restraint that Paul spoke of in 2 Thessalonians 2 and one of these “many antichrists” will ascend to become the “antichrist”.

But as it is, that spirit of defection and apostasy is alive and well.

This world is antichrist

This world hates Christ

And Satan is working overtime to use them to attack the church. And John says, "From this we know that it is the last hour."

You need to know about Satan's agenda to attack the church.

It is a real battle plan.

Now, last time we even started talking about some of the characteristics of these antichrists.

We looked at the first characteristic which was: DEFECTION

(19) "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."

It answers a very important question for us even regarding security of the believer.

We've often heard people who claim that one can lose their salvation indicate that they have witnessed people who were saved and then walked away from the Lord.

John clarifies that reality here.

If someone who you think is a Christian denies Christ and walks away from the church, what does that tell you?

THEY WERE NEVER REALLY SAVED.

(They merely deceived you into thinking they were.

It could be that they were even deceived themselves.)

And God has appointed that at least some of those apostates be exposed "so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."

The church needs to know that.

- You need to know that not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" is actually saved.
- They are spies among us.
- They are phony brethren.
- Some are there intentionally and maliciously to do Satan's work of destruction.
- Some are there sort of unwittingly.

· They are being used of Satan but may be deceived themselves in regard to the fact that they are lost because they never examine themselves.

But regardless of their motive the reality is that there are antichrists in the church and God proves that

By appointing that at least some of them are now departing.

One day they will all depart, but some do it now so you will realize what John is trying to tell you.

ONE CHARACTERISTIC OF ANTICHRISTS IS THEIR DEFECTION.

Well, let's move on this morning and look at a couple more characteristics of an antichrist.

2) DENIAL (22-23)

(22-23) "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."

When we are talking about an antichrist we are talking more than just a brother or sister who has grown lazy in fellowshipping with the saints.

Look, you should know that church attendance or fellowshipping with the saints is a command of Scripture. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

The point is obvious. (It's why I'm a little torn about offering livestream)

- You can listen to Christian music in your car...
- You can watch sermons online...
- You can read Christian books in your home...

There is a lot in the way of private worship and devotion that you can do in absolute solitude.

But you cannot "stimulate one another to love and good deeds"

If you forsake the assembling! Church attendance is a command.

But even the writer of Hebrews noted that some believers had gotten into the habit of forsaking the assembly.

I point that out because it is an important distinction.

- To be certain failing to participate in corporate worship is a sin,

· But just because someone has gotten out of the habit of regular attendance does not necessarily make them an antichrist.

Failing to attend regularly is not the same thing as defection.

The type of defection John refers to is accompanied by DENIAL.

DENIAL OF WHAT?

Denial of the gospel; namely the person and work of Jesus Christ.

That is what John points about these antichrists.

“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?” What is that?

It is a denial of the person of Jesus.

- They say He is not the Messiah.
- They say He is not the Savior.
- They say He is not the King.
- They say He is not Lord.

John says, “This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

And someone may say, “Wait, they aren’t denying the Father, they are just saying that Jesus isn’t the Messiah.”

To which John clarifies:

(23) “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.”

If you deny the Son you are denying the Father.

John 5:22-23 “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

The point is that we aren’t just talking here about a lazy Christian.

We are talking about a person who denies the person and work of Jesus.

They aren’t just sinful, they are antichrist.

And might I add to this, that it may also be a DENIAL OF OMISSION.

You say, what do you mean?

Matthew 10:32-33 "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. "But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

To be certain, there are some who boldly and verbally deny Jesus.

But Jesus said that a simple failure to confess is also a denial.

- Some are sort of secret deniers.
- They just refuse to confess Jesus as Lord.
- They just refuse to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him.

Silence can be denial too.

Luke 11:23 "He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me, scatters."

I told you last time, but there are only 2 categories of people.

There are the Disciples of Christ and there are antichrists.

There is "NO UNDECIDED" category.

And antichrists are exposed by their denial of Christ,

Whether verbally or even silently.

They may be associated with the church, but sooner or later they defect from the church. Because in their heart they have denied the person and work of Jesus.

That is how you know an antichrist.

Defection, Denial

3. DECEPTION (26)

(26) "These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you."

And this is a third characteristic of those who are antichrists. They "are trying to deceive you."

And might I add that this is TRUE OF EVERY SINGLE ONE of them.

You might think that there is such a thing as sort of an innocent antichrist, but there is not.

They are in the church and being used by Satan for one purpose: DECEPTION

Now, they may not realize they are being used of Satan to deceive, but they are.

We typically here think of that loud and boisterous false prophet.

- That one who openly distorts the gospel and preaches what is false.
- Clearly they are antichrist and clearly they are deceiving.
- You really ought to spot them.

But they aren't the only ones.

Every single antichrist in the church is here for the purpose of deception. How?

Well, for one thing, they're deceiving you with **THEIR FALSE TESTIMONY**.

- By being in the church, they are testifying that they have been redeemed.
- They are testifying that they have been set free from sin and enslaved to Christ.
- They are testifying that they have been born again.

In effect they are saying, "You can look at my life as an example of what salvation should look like."

That in and of itself is deceptive.

This is why ultimately that "so-called brother" who lives in sin, if they will not repent, must be removed from the church.

Remember Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 as he spoke about that man who was sleeping with his father's wife?

1 Corinthians 5:5-7 "I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed."

- That's what Paul meant when he said, "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?"
- He was saying that this "so-called brother" is living in sin and he is thus deceiving the flock by giving a faulty testimony of salvation.
- He will inevitably influence others.

Every single antichrist is deceiving the church in this way.

They are claiming a salvation that they do not have.

But there is even more than that.

They also deceive you with THEIR WORLDLY LOGIC

THINK ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE between one who has been redeemed and one is not.

When we are saved, we are given the Holy Spirit, and the mind of Christ.

- And we are granted understanding
- Our mind is being renewed by God's word
- Our will is being conformed to Christ's

But an unbeliever does not have that. What governs the thought process of an unbeliever?

ONLY THEIR UNREGENERATE MIND.

- They are those who follow their own fallen logic.
- They are those who follow the pattern of the world.
- They are those who give worldly advice.

They may not all do it maliciously, but they all do it, because that's all they know.

You understand that so many of the commands of Christ run absolutely contrary to thought processes of the culture.

But how dangerous it is in the church when there are those who disregard the commands of Christ in order to follow their own worldly logic, or even worse to follow the pattern of the world.

- You see this in the way churches are influenced to handle money.
- You see this often times in the way churches select leaders.
- You see this often times in the way churches pursue numerical growth.

In areas like that we see churches all over the place who follow worldly patterns and strategies for things like that instead of Biblical ones.

ARE WE TO ASSUME that those churches just decided that they didn't care what God thinks?

I suppose it is possible, but certainly not in every case. What we actually have in those situations are churches that have been deceived and influenced in part by the antichrists in their midst.

- They had men and women in their midst who were actually antichrist,
- But who were able to gain enough respect and influence in the body
- That they were able to steer the congregation after worldly logic instead of the Biblical command. IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.

It happens especially easy when a church values.

Secular Education and Worldly Success and Charismatic Personality over the genuine fruits of redemption. But the point is every antichrist in some form or fashion is here for one purpose and that is deception.

They are here to lead the saints away from the will of God.

It is Satan's Sinister Agenda. He has planted them here.

Now, the church was actually **CONFUSED** and **CONCERNED**

Because they saw people defecting or departing from the church.

And John says:

- **FIRST OF ALL**, that's not surprising since it is the last hour.
- **SECONDLY**, leaving is actually a good thing since it now proves to you that not everyone in your midst is really saved.

Now, because of their defection, you should realize that there are tares among the wheat.

- There are those in your midst who are deceiving you.
- They are not disciples of Christ they are antichrists.
- They deny Christ and some day they will ultimately depart from Him.

But at the very least you should then understand that Satan is at work here in this final hour to infiltrate and deceive the church.

THAT IS SATAN'S SINISTER AGENDA.

Everyone aware of that now?

Well, look, I know that's **A LITTLE CONCERNING** and most likely it brings up some questions in your own mind.

1. How can I keep from being deceived by them?

2. How do I know that I'm not one of them?

Those are good questions.

Well, let's move on to the next point.

Satan's Sinister Agenda

2. YOUR SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGE

1 John 2:20-23

What a great change of direction here by John

"But..."

IT IS TRUE THAT

- Not everyone who associates with the church is actually part of the church.
- There are antichrists in our midst.
- Some of them are falling away.

"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know."

What are the chief distinctions here between those who are antichrist and those who are genuinely Christ's? (There are 2)

1) Those who are saved "have an anointing from the Holy One"

2) Those who are saved "all know" (that is the truth)

These are things that distinguish and separate

The antichrists from the genuine saints of God.

FIRST of all, let's talk about this "anointing"

"You have an anointing from the Holy One"

It's a phrase that has been corrupted in recent years thanks to charismatic theology, particularly on the television.

- It is likely that most everyone here has seen some faith-healing preacher like Benny Hinn wave his coat at a crowd of people and say something like "Receive the anointing"
- And then you see the crowd sort of fall back onto each other as this supposed anointing overtakes them.

- It is often pedaled as some sort of “secondary” or “extra” shot of the Holy Spirit.
- It is referred to as some additional and perhaps even temporary filling of the Holy Spirit that normal believers don’t have or at least don’t always have.
- And so you need some “anointing vendor” to waive his coat at you or hit you on the forehead or yell “fire” at you or some strange thing like that so that you will get this special anointing that will make you fall down or dance around or laugh hysterically or something like that.

And thanks to these huckster preachers the word “anointing” has actually almost taken on a negative connotation.

Most believers don’t seem to know what it is, and many, based on what they’ve seen on television would say they don’t want it.

But NOTICE WHAT JOHN SAYS as he speaks to the entire church.

“You have an anointing from the Holy One”

It is something that is reality for all believers.

WHAT IS IT?

It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Remember the preaching of John the Baptist?

Matthew 3:11-12 “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. “His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

John said that Jesus would come and He would baptize you with one of two things.

- He would either baptize you with the Holy Spirit (salvation)
- Or He would baptize you with fire (judgment)

After Christ ascended, the proof of His coronation as King was that He then sent the Holy Spirit to all those who believed in Him.

Acts 2:32:33 and Acts 2:38-39

This is what John is referring to as “the anointing”

So the first thing you need to understand as a believer in Christ is that there is no threat that you will fall away because you have the Holy Spirit.

Later John will say:

1 John 4:4 "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."

It is true that

- Satan is working to infiltrate the church.
- Satan is deceiving and running his "hurry up offense"
- There are many antichrists who are being used by him
- One day the antichrist will actually ascend to power

But: NONE OF THEM ARE AS POWERFUL AS WHAT GOD HAS PLACED IN YOU.

There is a war, but our great Ally is stronger than our enemy.

The Holy Spirit who was given to us is our great source of protection and victory against even the sinister agenda of Satan. He is the One who seals us safely in God's family.

Ephesians 1:13 "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

Ephesians 4:30 "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

- We don't fear defection.
- We don't fear falling away.
- Those who are truly in Christ are sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

We "have an anointing from the Holy One"

It is the Holy Spirit who has poured into our hearts a supernatural love for God that will not fail even when faced with deception and persecution.

Paul asked: (Romans 8:35-39) WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

Paul's conviction is based upon the fact that through the Holy Spirit we have been given a supernatural love for God that even persecution cannot destroy.

Thanks to our anointing of the Holy Spirit and the truly redeemed aren't going anywhere.

BUT EVEN MORE THAN JUST SECURITY,

What John seems to have in mind here is the enlightening that the Holy Spirit brings to us?

HE DOESN'T JUST BRING US SECURITY,

HE ALSO BRINGS US UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUTH.

John says, "You have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know."

John's focus there is on our ability to counter deception.

John goes on:

(21) "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth."

Because of the Holy Spirit we are those who "know the truth"

Do you remember Paul's statement about Christian wisdom?

1 Corinthians 2:10-16 Read

Because of the Holy Spirit, we now have spiritual enlightenment.

Those who are deceived and led astray by the antichrists

Are those who are void of the Spirit and thus lack this knowledge?

IT IS OUR ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT that grants us this spiritual understanding.

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

Later in this epistle John will say: 1 John 2:27

John IS NOT there nullifying the importance of teachers and preachers.

Certainly it is the Holy Spirit who gifts believers to fulfill such roles.

John is simply pointing out that as one who has the Holy Spirit,

You're not totally dependent on someone else to give you the truth

We certainly find value in those who can teach, but every believer already has the greatest Teacher ever dwelling within them.

He knows the very depths and thoughts of God!

And key in John's mind is the PRIMARY MESSAGE that the Holy Spirit teaches.

What is the primary message of the Holy Spirit? (John 16:13-15)

Jesus said it.

- The Holy Spirit will "guide you into all the truth"

Truth about what?

- "He will glorify me, for He will take of mine and will disclose it to you."

THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS!

The Holy Spirit teaches the truth about the person and work of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit discloses to all believers the truth about Christ.

SO LISTEN TO JOHN HERE.

- Church, it is true that Satan is working overtime to sow tares among the wheat.

- It is true that Satan is seeking to deceive and distort.

- It is true that Satan would love to pull believers out of the church.

We certainly need to be aware of his schemes.

BUT WE NEED NOT FEAR HIS SCHEMES.

WHY?

Because we have one more powerful than him!

We have the Holy Spirit.

- We have the One who seals us for all eternity

- We have the One who shows us the truth

We are not going to believe those antichrists when they come up with all their false doctrines because the Holy Spirit has already shown us what is true.

For example:

(22-23) "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."

That is obvious isn't it?

- If someone says that Jesus is not the Savior, you know that's a lie.
- If someone denies that Jesus is the Son of God, you know that's a lie.

WHY DO YOU KNOW THAT'S A LIE?

- Because the Holy Spirit, who abides in you, has testified otherwise.

WE ARE NOT DECEIVED BECAUSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

So while we are certainly aware of Satan's schemes we are not afraid of them

Because greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.

NOW, WE ARE OUT OF TIME, but there's still more John has to teach us about living in the last hour.

Tonight I would just close with the reminder of how badly you need the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Apart from the Spirit you have no power to resist the evil one.

Apart from the Spirit you have no ability to discern what is true and what is false.

Apart from the Spirit there is no hope of your endurance.

And you only receive the Holy Spirit through placing your faith in Christ.

Christ gives the Spirit to those who trust in Him.

IF YOU HAVE NOT TRUSTED IN CHRIST, YOU MUST. (Acts 2:37-40)

Blessing your way and Part 3 next week!!!!!!