

Text: 1 John 2:18-29

Section 1

18Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19They 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. (1 John 2:18-19)

By this time, Jerusalem had already been destroyed, temple worship had ended, and most likely John was the only surviving apostle. Therefore, the apostolic age, in which the teachers and ministers that had actually seen and walked with the Lord Jesus were teaching the people, was ending—"the last hour." Already, false teachers—"antichrists"—were appearing to fill the void, teaching those things which were contrary to the Gospel of Christ.

1Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

Paul warned that false and distorted gospels would appear, and that we are to reject those gospels and those that preach them.

6I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! 10For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:6-10)

Amazingly, the "antichrists" of which John speaks came not from outside the Church, but inside. John makes clear, however, that those that departed from Christ were not true believers—"not really of us." Make no mistake here: John is not saying that these individuals were saved and then became lost. On the contrary, these false believers were never truly saved. The Bible is clear in its teaching that those that are truly saved never become lost, because they have been given to Christ by the Father.

24The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. 26"But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. 27"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29"My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30" I and the Father are one." (John 10:24-30)

Section 2

20But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. (1 John 2:20)

Again, those that are truly saved are anointed and sealed by God, and can never be lost.

21Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. (2 Corinthians 1:22)

Indeed, we that believe have been **chosen** by God, **called** by Him to be His People. It is because salvation comes from God that we are sure that once we are saved we can never become lost.

9But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. (2 Peter 2:9-10)

37"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39"This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:37-40)

How can you become a member of this People of God? Repent of sin, confess Christ as Lord, and believe that He is the risen Son of God. He'll save everyone that truly believes!

38Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39"For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." (Acts 2:38-39)

9that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 12For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Romans 10:9-13)

Section 3

21I 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. 22Who 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. 23Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:21-23)

John is writing to believers for the same reason that I have us read so many Scriptures each week—to encourage them. What can be more encouraging to a true believer than to study and be reminded of the great promises found in God's Word?

9For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:9-11)

Again, we are to "test the spirits" to determine which teachers are telling the truth, and which are spreading falsehood. Those that are false we are to shun.

1Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

To have the Father one must have and confess the Son. Jesus stated plainly that He and the Father are One, and that the way to the Father—to salvation—is through faith in the Son.

6Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. 7"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." 8Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:6-9)

Section 4

24As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. (1 John 2:24)

Now we come to the issue of assurance and perseverance. Lots of people make a verbal show of repentance and professions of faith, but perhaps the vast majority of those that make such professions fall away. John tells us to "abide in the Son and in the Father," echoing what Jesus taught the night before He was crucified.

1"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries

up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. (John 15:1-11)

Jesus tells us that we must “**abide**” in Him, and that the way to do that is to keep His commandments. Let me remind you of the promise Paul made in Romans 10 regarding salvation:

9that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; (Romans 10:9)

To be saved we must confess Jesus Christ as Lord—that is, as Master. The Scripture is plain in stating that we are not saved by works, but it is equally plain in stating that works are always present in those that are saved. There is no salvation without Lordship, without obedience. To say that one can pray a prayer, say the right words, maybe get baptized, and then go right on with life as he did before without any changes or concept of obedience and yet with assurance that they will be in Heaven makes a mockery of Christ and of the Gospel. Obedience always accompanies salvation.

Section 5

25This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

For those that truly repent and believe, abiding in Him, we have the promise of eternal life. Even though physical death will happen (unless Christ returns first), we will be raised unto eternal life.

16"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

25Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)

Section 6

26These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. 27As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. 28Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. 29If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. (1 John 2:26-29)

John again warns against those “*antichrists*” that attempt to deceive the People of God, and again exhorts them to abide in Him. Again, there is no salvation without obedience. Paul made clear the works and traits that accompany salvation as opposed to those that are not present in those that are saved. Check your fruit!

9Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

19Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:19-24)

The Lord Jesus Christ will come again and judge the living and the dead, and every knee will bow before Him. The question is, will we bow the knee in this life and be saved, or wait until the final judgment and be damned. Will we “*shrink away from Him in shame at His coming,*” or rejoice in the knowledge that our names are “**written in the book of life?**” I hope and pray that all of us are in the latter group!

11Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.13And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)