



4. An Anointed People 1 John 2:18-29

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.

21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 24 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

25 And this is what he promised us--even eternal life. 26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him.

28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. 29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

In the July 15, 1993 'BOARDROOM REPORTS, Peter LeVine writes: "When the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey ran a help-wanted ad for electricians with expertise at using Sontag connectors, it got 170 responses -- even though there is no such thing as a Sontag connector. The Authority ran the ad to find out how many applicants falsify resumes."

Lying is very much a part of modern life and people accept petty lying as acceptable practice and in extreme situations regard untruth as an acceptable tactic. But as God's people we know how destructive lies and falsehood are.

Right from the beginning of the church the people of God have contended with those who would teach falsehood. And as the apostle gives advice to the children, the fathers and the young men, he gives each of them the warning about antichrists. If you do some reading about this subject you'll find many books and articles on the Antichrist in terms of future prophecy. This isn't what this passage is about as John makes clear - it is about those who were anti-Christ - antichrists. They are against Christ. There is no mystique about the term. It's used to identify people who were teaching against the Person of Christ. They were living amongst them and teaching falsehood to the people of God.

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belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

In this case the antichrists are those that already have a background in the Christian faith but they never did really belong and now they are out there trying to lead the people of God astray. They are masquerading as the genuine thing but are not true believers.

The most dangerous people are those who seem to be of us but teach stuff that is not the truth of God and this passage stands as a warning to us to take care. Who are they? They are equated with liars in verse 22. And you can see the ground of their faith - someone who denies Jesus is the Messiah and worse denies the Father and the Son - a reference to the deity of Christ which is more explicit in the first verse of John's gospel.

22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

This was the problem that John's readers were facing. People were saying that Jesus was not the Son of God, we doubting His deity, were saying He was not equal with the Father. We have no problem with identifying the JW's or Mormons or Muslims as antichrists as they deny His deity. But it goes further.

Because it isn't just a case of denying His Deity but everything else of what we understand of the Son as Messiah too: the efficacy of His death, the shedding of His blood, the denial of His resurrection, the denial of His miracles. It's all denying the Person of Christ - it is a mark of antichrists and there are plenty in the "church" who deny these things. The trouble is, the counterfeit is difficult to spot sometimes as sometimes people we think that have credible ministries come up with off the shelf stuff. How off the shelf is off the shelf. John is helpful here. People become antichrists when they start to teach contra to what God's word teaches about the deity of Christ and His Messiahship. Anything at variance with that is falsehood.

At Hamonds last week my Assembly focused on just that. it is the unique fact of the gospel. let's read again those verses in John's gospel that express this so well:

John 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one." 31 Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" 33 "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

I used a quote from CS Lewis that focuses on the real issue:

"We are faced then with a frightening alternative. The man we are talking about was (and is) just what he said or else a lunatic or something worse. Now it seems to me obvious that he was neither a lunatic nor a fiend; and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that he was and is God. God has landed on this enemy occupied world in human form." C.S.Lewis

That is the truth as John consistently reveals it in the words of Jesus. It's not just John but the testimony of all NT writers. The "antichrists" were doubting the deity of Christ. And that is the issue we face today. People think Jesus was lots of things - but God? If God has indeed landed in this enemy occupied world in human form, then question marks are over all our lives. God has intervened in our lives. We are children

of God. His Spirit indwells us. So where's the difference? Or have we fallen for satan's propaganda and our attitude to Christ has been polluted by it because that is what antichrists do.

John's message is: don't be put off or worried by those antichrists that are still in the world today. Why?

● Because we are anointed people

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.

We are anointed. That's an interesting term. We are anointed people. Anointed with what? Anointing is a common term in the OT. Kings were anointed in the OT to show that God's favour and power had come upon them. In 1 Samuel we read how Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the presence of his brothers." Here the oil symbolises the Holy Spirit, and we are told in verse 13 *So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power."*

In the same sense Jesus is the anointed one - that's what Christ means. In this case it wasn't literal as in the OT and I could easily go into a discussion of when His anointing may have been. But not tonight as we are dealing with our anointing here although in a sense we are dealing with the same idea. He was the eternal Son and He was anointed to do His work here. Through Him we are the sons and daughters of the living God through Christ and we are also anointed to do His work.

In this sense anointing in this passage can only mean one thing - they are people marked out by God to be His people and to do His will. This was a letter written generally to a range of Christians indicating that the anointing is inclusive of all God's people.

It means that you are anointed for Christian ministry while you live in this world. It means that you have been enabled, entrusted, and empowered to accomplish God's will. And that is through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How do we know and discern the truth? Because we are the anointed people of God. The Spirit has revealed truth to us. We know when those who are antichrist come with the lies of satan are telling lies, because the truth is part of us.

27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him.

You don't need anyone to teach you. This doesn't mean that we have no need of scripture or preachers. What it means is that when those that come against us teaching new things or different things show themselves to be wrong because we already have a living relationship with a living Christ. We know that Jesus is Lord. We know that He is exalted. We know that he is God, the incarnate One - because we've already proved it. We are already there.

● **Because we have God's word**

See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

John adds here that it isn't our inward testimony, but it's what we have heard from the beginning. And John like the other NT writers have put it on paper for us and it is now scripture to us. How do we refute those who would seek to defer our minds from the truth of Christ. The witness of scripture stands there.

There are plenty of people out there who will say to you "The Spirit has told me this - therefore I'm right". But how do we discern that? Usually you'll find God's word will easily sort that out for you. I've heard Christian teachers in my time who have said "God has told me this or that". Interesting. The only problem was that it was contrary to God's word. The Spirit acts in accordance to scripture, not against it. God doesn't reveal one thing and then change His mind to suit our desires and prejudices 2000 years later.

There has been a lot said recently about the truth of scripture. What I find remarkable is that if we let scripture speak for itself, it speaks clearly until we want to try to bend it to feed out preconceptions and our prejudices and then it can be made to say anything those who wish to bend it desire. Let scripture speak - let God speak truth through scripture. The shock is that if you do that, we start to realise new things about our God - but also find that they've been there all the time. In fact people have been following them for 2000 years and we've missed the point!

The problem is that so often we feel that we are not. The world rushes in at us and never mind whether we are little children, or fathers or young men, satan can poison our lives and those that are antichrists get in and succeed in getting us worried about the truth of our faith.

When I first started to feel God's call into ministry, I kept a record of the landmarks that I faced in my attempts to discern God's will. It made fascinating reading. But as I saw the Spirit's testimony in my life, I rejoiced and whatever antichrists I face, I know that God has called me and others more mature than my self have affirmed what I have discerned. That is powerful testimony.

But that is our testimony as a church too. Satan would want to use antichrists to draw us from our mission. We need to discern God's will, to affirm it and to follow it. We have had a busy year. Let's listen to God's voice above the bustle and recognise Him.



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