

I JOHN 2:12-29

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I John chapter 2 as we finish up this chapter this evening and we continue our study through the Word of God.

As you may remember, we are in a section that we called *GOD IS LIGHT*. This section covers I John chapters 1 and 2, and they are very important for us to understand.

You see, this is a basic truth about God, that He is light and there is no darkness in Him at all!

And John makes that point in I John chapter 1. Remember what John said in I John 1:5, **“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”**

In other words, there is not one blemish or stain or mark or sin in the character of God. It speaks of moral perfection, absolute perfection!

We need to understand that truth because if we don't, when difficult times come into our lives, and they will, when bad things happen to us, and they will, we may blame God for it. We need to understand that there is not even one spot in regard to the character of God and thus, like James reminds us, **“Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”** James 1:16-17.

May we not forget that truth!

Now in chapter 2 of I John, since we know that God is light, the focus is that we should walk accordingly or walk in the light as He is in the light.

If we are walking in the darkness then we are not walking with God for as I have said, there is no darkness in Him at all!

Now tonight we are going to be looking at the spiritual state of believers or how they mature in the faith – I John 2:12-14.

John then speaks of the focus of our love, the world or the Lord - I John 2:15-17.

Then he moves into the deceptions that are coming and have come into the church – and we see that in I John 2:18-23.

He then moves to how the truths of God that we have can set us free from these deceptions that have come and are coming upon the church – I John 2:24-27.

Lastly, John closes out this chapter by looking at how we should be when our Lord appears since we are children of God, that we don't need to be ashamed in Christ – I John 2:28-29.

So we have a lot of ground to cover tonight and let's begin reading in I John chapter 2, starting in verse 12 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through the Word of God.

I JOHN 2

VERSES 12-14

When John speaks of “**little children**” he uses the Greek word TEKNION, (tek-nee'-on) or “*little born ones.*”

Now who is John speaking of here?

Some feel that it is a new Christian, a baby Christian we might say.

I don't think that is the point here in I John 1:12, but in verse 13 I think he is specifically speaking of a baby Christian or newborn Christian.

And John will use this phrase "**little children**" elsewhere in this letter and he is speaking to all believers, we are all born into the family of God. And when you think about the age of John, he could speak of them as children!

You see, the Greek word, TEKNION refers to all the children of God. That means the young, old and in-between.

And look again at what John said, "**. . . Because your sins are forgiven you . . .**"

Make no mistake about it, we have all become children of God because of the fact that our sins have been forgiven through the shed blood of Jesus Christ applied to our lives by faith!

Now, what does this phrase, "**for His name's sake**" mean?

Simply, it speaks of the fact that we are forgiven on the basis of who He is and what He has done!

And John is basically saying, "***Here it is little born ones. Your slate is perfectly clean, and it is not only clean, but it will remain perfectly clean because Jesus died in your place!***"

Praise the Lord for that fact!

In Psalm 23:3 David said, "**He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.**"

And Asaph said in Psalm 79:9, "**Help us, O God of our salvation, For the glory of Your name; And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, For Your name's sake!**"

Make no mistake about it. My sins are not forgiven for my sake. They are not forgiven for anything that I have done or deserve. This is totally what God has done for me or, "**For His name's sake.**"

And from here we see that John divides up the “**little children**” or “*little born ones*” into two groups of people, “**fathers**” and “**young men.**”

This first group, the “fathers” are part of the “*little born ones*” or believers and we are told that these believers “**know**” the Father.

And the Greek word for “**know**” is GINOSKO and it speaks of knowing by experience.

In other words, this is speaking of someone who has known the Lord for some time. They have experienced all that life could throw at them, and as difficult as it was or even is, they are holding tight to God the Father because they know Him, and they understand that He is looking out for them.

But you are not going to be able to cling to the Lord unless you spend time knowing Him by being in the Word of God and then applying that to your daily life, the situations you face in life!

You see, they have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, they have done battle with the enemy and now they are able to share what they have experienced with others so that they may grow in the Lord.

Through life’s experiences they have grown in the faith, it has made them strong.

Let me give you this perspective. Think of a very tall tree, it looks very impressive, but a strong wind can come and blow it to the ground. But why, how could that happen? How can something that big and tall be knocked down, it looks so strong?

Because its roots are not firmly established in the ground and all you can see is what is above ground, but when the storms come, it will not stand.

For a mature Christian, he has his roots firmly established in Christ and thus, when the storms of life come, and they will, they will not be blown away, they will not be blown down! What a great lesson for us to learn!

And then John speaks of “**young men**” or those who maybe have not walked with the Lord for a long time but are facing the battles that Satan is throwing at them and they are standing strong in the Lord!

John then speaks of “**little children**” once again but this time he uses a different Greek word.

He uses the Greek word, PAIDIA and this Greek word denotes young immature children who are still under their parent’s authority and instruction.

This is speaking of an immature Christian. Yes, they know Father God, but they still have some growing up to do!

Now, as cute as little children are, if they don’t grow up, that is tragic and the same is true for Christians!

Paul makes this point in I Corinthians 3:1-3 as he says, “**And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?**”

Thus, you can’t remain a spiritual baby all your life, you need to grow!

Again we see John speak of the “**young men**” and he speaks of them being strong!

Think about it. You don't send children to war and you don't send old men to war, but you send the young men to do battle because they are equipped to do battle with the enemy, they have the strength to fight!

In verse 14 John tells us that because they are "**strong**" they are able to do battle with the enemy. And he uses the Greek word ISCHUROS, (is-khoo-ros') that speaks of a power that has been given to us, to be equipped with a talent or quality. And John tells us that it is the Word of God that gives us the power to overcome the wicked one – it is the sword of the Spirit!

The young men are on the front-line doing God's Work among His people!

Now John is going to move into a warning, he doesn't want us to fall into this trap that the enemy has set up.

So let's look at this warning!

VERSES 15-17

This passage is very important for us to understand and apply to our lives because Satan will use these things to get us to love the world and move away from our love for God. You can't love God and the world!

Now, in saying that, what does John mean when he speaks of the world?

First of all, it is not speaking of the planet earth. We can love the beauty of nature, the things that God has created, all the wonders that are out there.

Also, it is not referring to people, we are to love the people of this world with the love that God has given to us.

Here, in the context that it is written the Greek word for "**world**" is KOSMOS, and this word is speaking of those things that are in opposition to God.

All the evil that we see out there, this evil system is all under the authority of Satan.

To give you an example of this we can look at one of the first examples regarding this idea of the **“world.”**

We can go back to Genesis chapter 11 and the tower of Babel where man rebelled against God. And that rebellion of man against God permeates this world today.

One writer put it like this. He wrote, *“Kosmos (world) does not refer to the physical earth or universe but rather to the spiritual reality of the man-centered, Satan-directed system of this present age, which is hostile to God and God’s people. It refers to the self-centered, godless value system and mores of fallen mankind. The goal of the world is self-glory, self-fulfillment, self-indulgence, self-satisfaction, and every other form of self-serving, all of which amounts to hostility toward God.”*

Exactly. And remember that John told us that God is light and there is no darkness in Him at all. Thus, if we are walking in opposition to God, we are not walking in the light but in darkness, we are not walking with God.

James 4:4 tells us, **“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”**

We may not like that, but it is clear, you can’t serve God and mammon, you must choose and if you make yourself a friend of this world that is in opposition to God, then you are not a friend of God, but an enemy!

And today, things are heating up. There is a tremendous pull the world has on us, and it is easy to be drawn into its destructive ways.

What do I mean by that?

The world wants our time, it wants our attention, it wants our resources or our money and as we are drawn down that path our attention towards God, our time we spend with God, the resources that God has given to us is put aside, we just don't have the time, the attention or the resources to do both!

We see here that John lists three things that Satan uses to draw us away from God and he hasn't changed his ways since the Garden of Eden when he deceived Eve!

I guess if something works, why change.

Let's look at these three areas so we can be wise and not be drawn into its magnetic pull of destruction.

First of all, we see ***the lust of the flesh!***

The Greek word John uses for "**lust**" is EPITHUMIA, (ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah) and it speaks of a craving or a passionate desire.

Now that can be good or bad depending on the context of the sentence.

Here, obviously, this is not good, it is used negatively because the Greek word for "**flesh**" is SARX and it speaks of carnality, the depraved nature of man that is governing his life: his reason, his will, his emotions!

How do we know if something is right or wrong?

By God's Word opened up to us by His Spirit.

Here the person is given over to satisfying his fleshly desires with no concern about anything else. Think of people who are addicted to drugs, alcohol, pornography, sexual sin, and so-on. All these are appealing to the flesh and they are done to satisfy the fleshly appetite! The lust of the flesh!

Then John speaks of ***the lust of the eyes.***

This is just what it says it is, seeking to have all that you see.

Job tells us, “**I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?**” Job 31:3.

You see, he purposed in his heart that he would not look upon a woman lustfully, he took at stand with his eyes and refused to look or take a second look!

David said in Psalm 101:3, “**I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.**”

Don’t put things in front of your eyes that are going to cause you to lust after them, be wise!

Here again John is speaking of a person who has been given over to carnality.

Look at the catalogs that are mailed out today, they are appealing to the lust of the eyes with the idea once you see something, you will want to buy it! The same with the advertisement on television. That is not of God, but of the world that is in opposition to God, there is no control here.

And again, we see that today where people can’t stop buying things, the lust of the eyes!

And lastly, we see *the pride of life!*

This has the idea of boasting or bragging to impress someone. We boast as if we have the power to do these things apart from God enabling us.

You see, what this does is it takes God out of the picture even though the Bible tells us that He is the giver and the sustainer of life, that it is only because of Him that we live and breathe and move!

There is no room for the pride of life if we say we love God and are walking in the light as He is in the light!

And these three tactics that the Devil uses are not new, he used them in the very beginning, as I have said.

Remember what we are told in Genesis 3:1-7, **“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden”?’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”**

Look at how Satan tempted Eve in the Garden because it does fit in with the temptations that John is speaking of and it is what Satan will use against us.

First, we see the lust of the flesh - **“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food.”**

Then we see the lust of the eyes - **“... that it was pleasant to the eyes.”**

And lastly, we see the pride of life - **“... a tree desirable to make one wise ...”**

And, as hard as it is to believe, we see Satan try to tempt Jesus in the wilderness using these same tactics in Matthew chapter 4!

We start out with the lust of the flesh – “**... If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.**”

Next, we see Satan speak of the pride of life – “**... If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge concerning you’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’**”

And lastly, we see Satan try to tempt Jesus with the lust of the eyes, “**Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’**”

And how did Jesus combat these temptations by Satan?

By telling him, “*It is written!*”

Make no mistake about it, the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit is what we are to use in our battles that we face!

And there is a battle going on and many times Christians fall prey to these things because they are not paying attention, they don’t understand that battle that they are facing.

Paul reminds us in Galatians 5:17, “**For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**”

If you look at the advertising industry, those are the areas they focus on so that we may partake of their product.

Thus, we need to learn to be wise in what we desire, what we see, what we boast in!

We need to do as Paul admonished us in Romans 12:2, “**And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**”

Being conformed to this world is easy, just let them press in upon you and you will look just like them.

But God’s desire for us is to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, by allowing the Word of God opened up to us by the Spirit of God to work in us to make us more like Him!

And we need to put this into perspective, so we don’t fall prey to these things. All that the world has to offer, all these things, John reminds us, “**And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.**” I John 3:17. Amen to that!

This world system is going to pass away, and we will see that the Lord is going to return and set up His Kingdom on this earth and righteousness will fill this land!

God has given to us abundant life, eternal life and Satan gives us the things of this world that will be destroyed, they won’t last, they are not eternal!

The thing is, where will you put your investment in, the things of this world, which are passing away, or the things of God, which are eternal?

You see, it is pure folly to invest in this world that is in opposition to God and won’t last!

But if you do the will of God you will dwell with Him forever. It truly is a no brainer and yet, so many give into that which is temporary instead of that which is eternal.

Learn the lesson! You put your time, your attention, your resources in the things of God and you will gain eternal rewards!

I like what is on D. L. Moody’s tombstone, it really says it all: “***He who does the will of God abides forever.***”

VERSES 18-19

Who is John writing to, specifically here?

Little children or little born ones or born-again ones I should say. He is writing to believers.

And what is his point?

That the “**last hour**” has come and that phrase is an eschatological term that speaks of the “*last days*” (Hebrews 1:2) or that time period that started with the First coming of Jesus Christ and will continue on to the Second coming of Jesus and the Antichrist will precede or come before the Lord returns.

As you read this it would seem that John was expecting the Lord’s return at any moment and folks, we should also feel that way.

We are living in the last days and the biggest sign that the Lord’s return can happen at any moment is the birth of the nation of Israel. The Jewish people have returned to the land of Israel in 1948 after almost being destroyed by Hitler!

And then in 1967 they re-captured the city of Jerusalem.

And John is going to tell us that those who have this hope in the soon return of Jesus will purify themselves or that by having that attitude it will help them to live godly lives as they prepare for the return of Jesus!

Yes, the Antichrist is coming, but until he comes on the scene, John reminds us that there are many antichrists that appeared in John’s day and continue on into our day as well!

Who or what is John speaking of here?

I believe that John is speaking of the false teachers who have come on the scene to move people away from the truths of God that are found in the Word of God with their false doctrine!

Place yourself in Satan's shoes and think of the best way to destroy the church!

Now some would say to attack from the outside, persecute them and it will fall apart. But that has been tried and it is still being done today, but it does not work too well.

The best way to destroy the church is by bringing in false teachers with their false doctrine into the church and that has worked beautifully, I am sad to say! Compromise and watering the Word of God down, moving away from the truths of God found in the Word of God will destroy many churches and many lives!

Some of the false teaching that has been brought into the church by pastors and leaders is scary.

They say that Genesis is just a story and God used evolution to bring man and life into being. That is foolishness and there is so much we can say against that. But the best one for me is that Jesus believed in Adam and Eve, and He should know, He is God! (Matthew 19:4)

They deny the deity of Jesus, they deny His virgin birth, they deny His atoning work on the cross of Calvary, they deny the Word of God is truth, they say it just contains truth, they deny His return, they deny sin and the list goes on. And the point here is that if you deny these things, you are not even saved because apart from believing in the foundational truths of the Scriptures, you are believing in a different Gospel!

And here in I John 2:19 we see what they are all about. John tells us, "**They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.**"

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, "**These 'against-Christ' people used to be members of our churches, but they never really belonged with us or else they would have stayed. When they left us it proved that they were not of us at all.**"

Make no mistake about it, a false teacher with their false doctrine will leave the church, they will not remain because if the pastor is teaching the Word of God, they will not stay because their false teaching will be exposed by the Word of God and people will see it for what it is –

DOCTRINES OF DEMONS! (I Timothy 4:1)

And I have seen this over the years, and it is not a good thing when this happens. False teachers with their false doctrine will bring about division in the church. And sometimes they will refuse to leave because they are right, or so they think.

We saw that a few years back with the whole Hebrew Roots movement or how someone had brought that false teaching into the church. And the idea of adding works or keeping the Law to Grace was the focus and it did not matter what the Scriptures said, they were right.

And for them, because the Scriptures are really clear, they said that Paul was wrong when he spoke out against what this person believed and that did not fly too well in the church, or the other option that was used to justify what he believed was to say, we just don't understand what Paul was saying.

You tell me if you understand what Paul said in Romans 3:20, "**Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**"

I think that is very clear and thus, this person had to be removed from the church and his disciples followed him.

Now for me, I was amazed, sadden as well, when I saw how many people were angry with me and what I did. They felt that he did nothing wrong and yet, we are told in Romans 16:17-18, **“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”**

If they are going to continue with their false teaching, you remove them from the church, end of story.

If you don't, they will continue to gain followers of their doctrines of demons and as a leader, I am responsible. And in the end, it will destroy a church!

Make no mistake about it, the church needs to stand up for the truths of God found in the Word of God and not allow the spirit of antichrist to promote their false doctrines!

It is a sobering thought to think that those that are offering a false Jesus, an opposing Jesus, come from the church, but they are not of us and we need to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us.

That means not allowing their false doctrine to come into the church, don't give them a platform to teach their heresies from! Be wise.

Warren Wiersbe sums it up like this for us. He wrote,

It makes no difference what you believe, just as long as you are sincere!”

That statement expresses the personal philosophy of many people today, but it is doubtful whether most of those who make it have really thought it through.

Is “sincerity” the magic ingredient that makes something true? If so, then you ought to be able to apply it to any area of life, and not only to religion.

A nurse in a city hospital gives some medicine to a patient, and the patient becomes violently ill. The nurse is sincere but the medicine is wrong, and the patient almost dies.

A man hears noises in the house one night and decides a burglar is at work. He gets his gun and shoots the “burglar,” who turns out to be his daughter! Unable to sleep, she has gotten up for a bite to eat. She ends up the victim of her father’s “sincerity.”

It takes more than “sincerity” to make something true. Faith in a lie will always cause serious consequences; faith in the truth is never misplaced.

It does make a difference what a man believes! If a man wants to drive from Chicago to New York, no amount of sincerity will get him there if the highway is taking him to Los Angeles.

A person who is real builds his life on truth, not superstition or lies. It is impossible to live a real life by believing lies.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, pp. 978-979

And the problem today is many people are following a man instead of the Word of God.

And again, I have seen that where people will tell me, ***“You have to hear this guy. He’s got the truth. No one else has this but he is right on.”***

And, because that is a warning flag to me, I don’t bite and I do check the person out, but they are false teachers with their new false doctrine or so-called new false doctrine and that will not be tolerated here at Calvary, and it never should be in any church!

VERSES 20-23

There are some on television that speak of “*the anointing*” like they alone have it, or it is only for special people to receive it.

The problem in what they are saying is wrong. John is telling us that all believers have this anointing of God, but what is it?

It is speaking of the Holy Spirit who will show us the deceptions, expose them to us as false so we don’t fall prey to them. The Holy Spirit will expose these heresies with the truth of God’s Word.

How do I know that is what this anointing is all about?

Because John tells us that “**you know all things.**”

How do we know all things?

By the Word of God opened up to us by the Spirit of God and it will expose the false teachers and their false doctrine!

One writer put it like this. He wrote, “*The presence of the Holy Spirit in every believer enables him or her to perceive the truth of the gospel and to distinguish it from error. Of course, some Christians have more perception than others due to God-given ability, Satanic blindness, the influence of human teachers, sin in the life, etc.*”

And we are told by another writer, “*When a person is saved, he receives the indwelling Holy Spirit, and He enables the believer to discern between truth and error. When John tells his young readers “you know all things,” he does not mean this in an absolute sense. It is not that they have perfect knowledge, but rather that they have the capacity to recognize what is true and what is not. Thus the youngest, simplest believer has the capacity of discernment in divine things that an unsaved philosopher would not have.*”

Also, when John speaks of knowing these things, he doesn't use the Greek word GINOSKO or to know by experience but EIDO, which means knowledge by intuition.

You see, we know some things by intuition, the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts about them and they of course are in line with what God's Word has to say.

Paul, in I Corinthians 2:10-16 tells us, **“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For ‘who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”**

Now, in seeing this anointing that we have, why are so many people being led astray?

They are either not saved or they are not listening to the Holy Spirit's guiding, thinking they know better - but they don't!

J. B. Phillips explains it to us like this. He wrote, *“Truth is confined to what the Bible says (John 17:17). “No lie is of the truth.” There are many subtle, attractive, and persuasive lies in the world. The Devil is very clever in inventing them and men are very zealous in propagating them. Still, when all is said and done, a lie is a lie and not the truth. The theory of evolution is a lie - albeit a very popular one - and it is promoted by a vast number of very clever people. It contradicts the Bible, however, as to the creation and fall of man; therefore, it is a lie. All the cults teach lies, all the world’s religions deny Christ and propagate lies - even though those who proclaim them are passionately convinced that they have embraced the truth.”*

Here’s the thing. It is not how you perceive Christ, or who you think He is, but what God’s Word says, what the Holy Spirit is teaching and if you don’t agree with that, John says you are deceiving yourself into thinking you are saved.

If you don’t believe that Jesus is fully God, that He died for your sins and rose the third day according to the Scriptures, if you don’t believe that He is the only way to the Father, you will die in your sins!

The spirit of antichrist identifies itself by its denial of who Jesus is, and we are seeing that coming into the church today!

Now I do realize that some may see that as being harsh, that they don’t know God if they deny who He is, but John is very clear on that and thus, we must share what the truth is.

You see, John’s statement in verse 23 is very definitive. If anyone who denies the Person and work of Jesus Christ, *“denies the Son,”* does not know God, is not a true Christian, period, end of story!

Warren Wiersbe sums it up like this for us,

It is important that you stay with the truth of God's Word.

The Word (or message) Christians have "heard from the beginning" is all you need to keep you true to the faith. The Christian life continues just as it began: through faith in the Bible's message.

A religious leader who comes along with "something new," something that contradicts what Christians have "heard from the beginning," is not to be trusted. . . .

Let the Word abide in you (1 John 2:24), and abide in Christ (1 John 2:28); otherwise you will be led astray by the spirit of antichrist. No matter what false teachers may promise, you have the sure promise of eternal life (1 John 2:25). You need nothing more!

If false teachers were content to enjoy themselves in their own meetings, it would be bad enough; the tragedy is that they try earnestly to convert others to their antichristian doctrines. . . .

- Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT*, p. 981

VERSE 24

How do we preserve during these threatening times when the spirit of antichrist is growing?

By abiding in Christ, by abiding in the truths of God found in the Word of God. Don't let go of the truth of God.

We often hear that new is better, but that is not always the case. As Pastor Chuck Smith used to say, ***"If it is true it is not new and if it is new it is not true!"***

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 1:6-10, **“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”**

Don't succumb to the philosophies of man but be a bondservant of Christ! You will not be led astray when you follow the truth of God found in the Word of God! Abide in His Word and don't deviate from it!

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

A missionary to the American Indians was in Los Angeles with an Indian friend who was a new Christian. As they walked down the street, they passed a man on the corner who was preaching with a Bible in his hand.

The missionary knew the man represented a cult, but the Indian saw only the Bible. He stopped to listen to the sermon.

“I hope my friend doesn't get confused,” the missionary thought to himself, and he began to pray.

In a few minutes the Indian turned away from the meeting and joined his missionary friend.

“What did you think of the preacher?” the missionary asked.

“All the time he was talking,” exclaimed the Indian, “something in my heart kept saying, “Liar! Liar!”

That “something” in his heart was “Someone” - the Holy Spirit of God! The Spirit guides us into the truth and helps us to recognize error. This anointing of God is “no lie,” because “the Spirit is truth” (1 John 5:6).

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 981

May we be listening to what God is saying to us through His Word and His Spirit!

VERSE 25

When God’s truth lives in us, that which we heard from the beginning, then God lives in us and if God lives in us, then we have His promise of eternal life!

But here is the problem. Most American’s and a large portion of Christians in America don’t believe in absolute truth any longer. In other words, for Christians, they don’t believe the Bible is absolute truth. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

What is truth? Where do we find it?

Past generations have looked to a source outside themselves - namely God and the Bible - for determining morality and truth. But a new study from the Cultural Research Center (CRC) at Arizona Christian University shows that *some 58% of Americans surveyed no longer believe that and instead say it’s up to the individual to decide what is true or moral.*

The American Worldview Inventory 2020 concluded that “belief in absolute moral truth rooted in God’s word is rapidly eroding among all American adults, whether churching or unchurched, within every political segment, and within every age group.”

Shockingly, that does include American Christians, those who have historically pointed to the Bible as the source of absolute truth and the guide to how we should live our lives.

The study found that evangelicals, defined as those believing the Bible to be the true, reliable word of God, amazingly, are almost as likely to reject absolute moral truth (46%) as to accept it (48%).

Only 43% of those surveyed who identify as born-again Christians still embrace absolute truth.

- <http://bit.ly/3pJpWAZ>

That is why the church has become so ineffective today and they have embraced all kinds of false teaching and they truly don't know about what the everlasting life is all about! Very sad statistics and that was from last year!

VERSES 26-27

As in John's day, there will always be those who will try to deceive you.

But we have the Holy Spirit, the anointing of God that will teach us the things we need to grow by.

Now here is where some people run on a tangent and take this to unbiblical conclusions. Context, context, context!

When John tells us that "**you do not need that anyone teach you . . .**" some say that we do not need pastors, we do not need teachers, we can just teach ourselves.

It is true, we should be studying the Word of God on our own, but that is not what John is speaking of here.

If that was what John was saying, then why in the world would he have bothered to write them this epistle to teach them in the first place! He would not have done that, but he did, so that is not what he is saying!

What is the context of this section of I John?

Exposing false teachers who want you to embrace their false teaching and we can do that because we have this anointing from God. We have the Word of God opened up to us by the Spirit of God and thus, we can discern the lies of the Devil!

You see, what John is emphasizing here is that we have within us as Christians the only Teacher that really matters - the Holy Spirit!

But again, please don't come to the conclusion that teachers are not necessary, you should not be taught, because that is not what John is saying here nor is it what the Scriptures teach.

In fact, in Ephesians 4:11-16 Paul tells us, **“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”**

But don't leave it all up to teachers, you do have a responsibility to search the Scriptures, to see if what the teachers are saying is true so that you may grow, you can learn to discern what is truth and what is not!

You study the Scriptures, you read the Word of God!

And as we grow in God, as the Holy Spirit directs us in all truth, we will grow closer to Jesus!

If you want to know and understand the Bible, you don't have to look any further than the Spirit of God, the Author Who wrote it!

VERSES 28-29

We have no need to be ashamed when Jesus comes because we are abiding in Him, we are His children and we will not stand before Him in our own righteousness, which are like filthy rags, but the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith in Jesus.

Paul put it this way in II Corinthians 5:21, "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**"

But for those who are not His, not abiding in Him, they will be ashamed as they stand before God in their own righteousness, which are like filthy rags before a holy and righteous God! Those who have the spirit of antichrist, who deny Jesus, they will be ashamed!

I like the way that Spurgeon sums this up in regard to being prepared for the Lord's return. He wrote,

What is the way to prepare for Christ's coming? By the study of the prophecies? Yes, if you are sufficiently instructed to be able to understand them. "To be prepared for the Lord's coming," some enthusiasts might say, "Had I not better spend a month in retirement, and get out of this wicked world?" You may, if you like; and especially you will do so if you are lazy. But the one Scriptural prescription for preparing for his coming is this, "Abide in him."

If you abide in the faith of him, holding his truth, following his example, and making him your dwelling-place, your Lord may come at any hour, and you will welcome him.

- Charles Spurgeon

As I close this evening, let me leave you with this to think about. I have a picture of my dad when he graduated High School, and if I didn't know it was him, I would have to say that it was a picture of me, we look exactly alike, it is scary!

Why is that?

Because he is my father and thus, there is a family resemblance.

We, as children of God should have a resemblance of our heavenly Father because we are born of Him, and thus, our actions, our nature should resemble His.

We won't be perfect in this life, but practice righteousness, live, walk in the light as He is in the light! Shine forth Jesus and that will happen as we continue to abide in Him!

And perspective is everything as John reminds us, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”** I John 2:15-17.

The Lord is coming back, may we be ready and looking for His glorious appearing!