

1 John 2:18-21
“True versus false”

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I. Intro

The Apostle John’s letter was addressing the greatest blessing in life... *“fellowship with God”*. His letter addresses what he had observed in the church and that was that it had to be more than intellectual agreement with truth...it had to be application of truth. Our maturity in the faith is a natural progression as the Apostle John describes it this letter as *three different stages of growth with an appeal to each.*

1. **Children**: John identifies them as **“LEARNERS”**:
2. **Young men**: John identifies them as **“SOLDIERS”**:
3. **Fathers**: John identifies them as **“EXPERIENCED”**:

We have already noted the first two of the threefold tests of Christian life in the believer:

- **WALK IN LIGHT 2:3-6 Obedience**, (*In righteousness the destination of our obedience*)
- **WALK IN LOVE 2:7-11 Love**, (*The motivation of our obedience*)
- **WALK IN TRUTH 2:18-27 Truth**, (*The source of our obedience*)

The reason for this is that *our obedience is only as safe as it is fixed upon truth.* It is popular today for some to say that it isn’t truth that is the source of our obedience instead they say that it rather the “Sincerity” of the person not what the stability of their sincerity. A lie no matter how passionately obedient a person is in their devotion to it will not make what they believe true. Sincerity is not *“the magic ingredient”* that makes something true, it makes a difference in what a person believes is true. It doesn’t matter how obedient or even if a person has the right

motivation in their obedience if what they are following is a lie and not the truth the outcome will be that they are still as lost as they were before. The apostle devolves these three ways in this section:

- A. Vs. 18-21 The contrasts between what is false and what is true as seen in false teachers (antichrists) and true followers of Jesus.
- B. Vs. 22-23 The greatest lie of false teachers, (denying the necessity of the person and world of Jesus).
- C. Vs. 24-27 The encouragement for true followers of Jesus to defend the truth against the lie.

II. Vs. 18-19 The warning

Vs 18 In verse 17 John mentioned that the “*world was passing away*” and the reason for this was that the world system makes its appeal to the “*lust of the flesh*” which is based upon a lie. The life of the Christian is NOT only filled with peril in needs to be protected and God has supplied “TRUTH” to guide the believer through the obstacles of the false world system designed to trick and trip up believers. The uses of the repeated word “*little children*” suggests two things:

1. First, that they were in a relationship with God!
2. Secondly, that their position of maturity in Christ made them vulnerable to lies!

John also uses two terms to indicate the believer is living in a time of great crisis:

- A. First, notice this severity is couched in the phrase “it is the last hour”. This phrase speaks not of the duration of time but rather that KIND of time. As such, it speaks of the desperation of satan as his time is shortened and placed believers in greater danger do to our enemy knowing that he has a short time left to deceive. Since the resurrection of Jesus every Christian has been living in a time of great crisis as satan has known that his

time is coming to an end. It is therefore important for believers to know not only what they believe but why they believe it!

- B. Second, John mention who it is that is behind the deception “*antichrist*”. This term is used by John many times in the Bible. It is used three different ways: A spirit that is in the world that opposes or denies Jesus. False teachers who embody that spirit by spread the lies. A person who will head the final rebellion against Jesus. The spirit of the antichrist has been in the world since Genesis 3 and is the one behind every false doctrine and religious substitute for the reality of the truths of the person and work of Jesus. The word “**ANTI**” can mean both “*against*” or “*instead of*” which reveals the two truths with regard to the lies that they teach as the lies that false teaching is either aimed at being “*against*” Jesus or “*instead of*” Jesus.

The proof that we are in the “*last hour*” is that we have the proliferation of lies that are both “*against*” or “*instead of*” Jesus. But the truth of the matter is that we have had such since the garden of Eden in Genesis 3 and specifically since the Resurrection of Jesus. That’s what Jesus said in John 8:44 saying of the religious leaders and satan, “*You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*”

Vs. 19 The unfortunate reality of these lies is found in the results it’s had upon the rejection of TRUTH as John shows three results of believing a lie.

1. “*They went out from us*”: **DEPARTS FROM FELLOWSHIP**: John indicates that the believing a lie leads a person to depart from fellowship. This reveals to the reader that not everyone that is a part of the church is a part of the family of God. It is possible for a

person to be a “member” of the church but not a member of the body of Christ and this is based not upon location of their physical presence but of their heart! If their heart has departed from truth then they have departed from fellowship with God and His church. One of the great benefits of the church is fellowship or with other people but the word means “things in common” and if a person has believed a lie then we no longer have Jesus in common! The departure from God’s people reveals that there was a departure from truth!

2. “*They were not of us*”: **DENIES THE FAITH**: Second, such a departure is an indication that were “*counterfeits*” and not real believers. This isn’t implying that “staying in a Church” keeps a person saved, rather it indicates that remaining in fellowship with God’s people centered around the practice of the person and work of Jesus is evidence that that person is truly a Christian. The sad truth to fallen humanity is that a person can be close to a salvation experience with Jesus and even manifest some characteristics that would pass as a believer and yet not be a child of God. All true believers regardless of church affiliation share the love of the truth of the Word of God and Jesus being essential. Most of the false teaching that has come into the world started out in the Church as those who taught such lies departed from the truth. Those that have experienced “*like precious faith*” cannot ever depart from it as Peter said to Jesus after the 70 departed, “*Where shall I go You have the words of eternal life.*” (John 6:68-69)
3. “*That it might be manifest, that none of them were of us*”: **DECEIVES THE FAITHFUL**: Those that depart from fellowship also deny the faith and in turn be actively engaged in deception of those who remain in the Church. It won’t be long before those that depart will no longer profess the truths about Jesus they will be against Him

and instead of Him. Jesus' work and words will no longer be sufficient they will need to be accompanied but the works of the flesh! He can be demoted to a "good teacher" or a "wonderful man" but NEVER the SON OF GOD and the ONLY WAY TO THE FATHER!

III. Vs. 20-21 The reminder

Vs. 20-21 With the warning John now offers the reader what God has given to protect the believer from lies as he mentions **four things provided for the Christian:**

1. **Vs. 20 REALITY** "*You have the anointing*": Those that had departed had no real encounter with the Holy Spirit, they had merely counterfeited the manifestations that they thought indicated the encounter such as hyper emotionalism. True believers don't seek emotionalism as a sign of an encounter with God they seek TRUTH!
2. **Vs. 20 HUMILITY** "*From the Holy One*": The greatest proof of the "anointing" of the Holy Spirit in a person's life is that any such encounter will ALWAYS seek to glorify the Words and Works of Jesus and NEVER the instrument! Any true anointing will always be done in humility and brokenness and never in arrogance.
3. **Vs. 20 CONFIDENCE** "*You know all things*": Because the Holy Spirit possesses the heart and mind of the believer we have complete confidence in the truth of the word of God and are not looking for outside thing to validate Gods Word instead we use the word of God to validate our experiences. There are folks who are constantly looking for other authors and writers other than the Holy Spirit to speak to their hearts and such a quest apart from the Holy Spirit and God's word has great potential to leading people away from God instead of towards Him.
4. **Vs. 21 ASSURANCE**: "*I have not written to you because you do not know the truth,*

but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.” Finally, the believer has great assurance as God’s truth constantly moves us towards Him and the mere fact that John was writing this to them was assurance of their fellowship with God as they had not departed from fellowship, denied the faith, nor were they involved in deceiving the elect! The point of the follower of Christ is NOT that we will know everything as we certainly don’t. But the believer in Christ knows HIM who alone is hidden all wisdom and knowledge. We aren’t looking for experiences or other knowledge as we have come to Jesus who alone is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE! The Christian continues in the Word of God by the Spirit of God!