

1st JOHN BIBLE STUDY

1 John 2:20-24

Lesson #9

Introduction

Last week we discussed John's verses about those people who were meeting with the church, and claiming to be members of it, but who held views that were inconsistent with those of regenerate believers. They insisted on practicing and teaching heresies that dishonored Christ, led the true believers into accepting sinful practices, and damaged the church of Jesus Christ. In this case the true believers either outnumbered the false, or John's Apostolic authority maintained control of the true church, and the false professors ended up leaving. Which John said was for the purpose of exposing their false professions of Christ. And it's regarding this very point that John now speaks the following verses, which are directed to those who remained faithful to the teachings:

The Essential Truth

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. 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. 22 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. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 As 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 2:20-24 (NASB)

This anointing John refers to is from God, and is His way of demonstrating His recognition of our belonging to Him. Anointing has long been a process of public recognition of a position or title. It's a way of showing acceptance of someone as being something special and unique. And this anointing of God is defined as that knowledge that Christ Jesus is indeed the divine Son of God, manifested in the flesh, who was sent by Him to be the one and only Savior of mankind. This sure and certain knowledge is that anointing that every genuine believer has received as a precious gift of God.

It's a symbol of God's recognition of His elect as being His very own children. It's not just a rational conclusion that's reached through study and observance, but much more, a divine gift of God, freely given by His grace. For by grace we have been saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God. And it's Not of works, meaning either behaviors or mental reasonings, so that no man may boast of his own efforts or merits in its acquisition. (Eph 2:8-10) The one who is anointed stands motionless while others perform the process upon him, and likewise, the one who receives the anointing of God, in the true knowledge of His Son, stands motionless, though deeply humbled and honored, as God performs the entire process upon him. This anointing that John is referring to is nothing else but that saving faith in Christ Jesus, encompassing all those essential elements of His divinity, His authority, His holiness, His uniqueness, and all those essential truths that He declared both in person and later through His inspired writings.

In verses 20 and 21, John tells them that he isn't writing to them because they don't yet know all these things, but because they do know them. They are part and parcel with that anointing of God through saving faith. This is precisely what saving faith is, it's the absolute unshakeable and unwavering belief in those essential elements of Jesus Christ. And it's impossible to be a believer unless you believe those things that make you a believer. How can one call themselves a believer if they don't actually believe all of those things that make them one? Believing only some, or even most of the things about Jesus, but not everything that He said and taught, doesn't make one a believer, as evidenced by the absence of the anointing of God, that yields unreserved, unrestricted, and unlimited faith in absolutely everything that He teaches.

And this anointing is a faith anointing, not a power anointing, as many of those Pentecostals suppose. John is speaking about knowing the truth, and the truth in view here is that of Jesus Christ coming in the flesh as the divine Son of God, and His unique position as both the Lord over, and the Savior of, the whole world. As well as His mandates of holy and righteous behaviors by His followers, for the purpose of acceptable worship, and the display of His glory through the visible actions of His followers.

Furthermore, No lie ever proceeds forth out of the truth. Truth doesn't give birth to lies. If what you believe, and what you teach deviates from His teachings in any manner whatsoever, no matter how small it might seem, then it hasn't come from the truth, and it will not lead to godliness. No lie is ever of the truth, meaning that all deviations from essential Biblical orthodoxy are not of God, and will not lead to His kingdom or His righteousness.

God's kingdom is not one of mixed signals. It's not a kingdom of truths and lies all living in gracious loving harmony, as many seem to perceive. Truth, especially concerning the essence, and nature, and accomplishments of Jesus Christ is at the very heart of God. No deviations will be tolerated here. When the scriptures speak of Jesus, the Son of God, it speaks of One so holy, so perfect, so powerful, and so important to God the Father that everyone who becomes aware of His existence should shudder with fear at the very thought of dishonoring or disregarding Him in any possible manner whatsoever.

The scriptures tell us that by the will of God, Jesus Christ spoke the universe into existence by His divine power. That everything that exists does so **by** Him and **for** Him, and He is before all things in importance and authority. (Col 1:15-20) These are among those divine and precious truths that are given to us as a gift of saving faith, and constitute God's own anointing of recognition upon all those whom He has chosen to be His own children. Please don't ever think that these are some things that you've come to acquire through your own conscientious efforts, for which God will be pleased and complimentary. Yes, He has dispensed them by way of the study of His scriptures, which you have perhaps faithfully done, but many indeed are those who study long and hard, and still never receive the gift of understanding and belief in those divine truths that are revealed. Many hear the gospel, and many can remember it, but belief in divine truth is a gift of God.

Why do we think that when the gospel is presented simultaneously to a hundred people, only two, or three, or four will actually believe that it's true? Do we really think it's solely based on the individual's personal response, irrespective of an effectual and indispensable work being done on that person by an act of the Holy Spirit? Many believe that it's a cooperative work, a synergistic effort of God and man, but that doesn't eliminate boasting, it fosters it. The anointing of God that John refers to here is that gift of faith that comes by grace alone, completely absent of man's contribution; but not apart from his willingness. **Because it is the willingness itself that is the gift.** (Phi 2:13) God's anointing is the willingness and ability to believe that His beloved Son is the Lord and Savior of the world, and apart from Him there is no other means ever created for mankind to ever come to God. (Jn 14:6, Acts 4:12) If one has truly received God's anointing of recognition, then they believe this with every fiber of their being, because this is that anointing that no one needs to be taught, but is the very gift of God.

If you are persuasive, and possess the gift of public speaking, you very well may persuade, or convince, or cajole, or by other means get people to do something you want them to do, or even believe something that you want them to believe, at least for a while, and if it doesn't affect their life to any serious degree. But the truth that John is describing is something that does affect our lives, quite substantially, and does come at a cost, often at very great cost, and therefore isn't acquired simply by clever or persistent persuasions. This is a truth that must come from within, but, at the same time, is certainly not absent of outward evidences and testimony.

Many will claim a deep belief in God, but not the God described in the holy scriptures, but rather one contrived in their own heart and mind. This kind of belief cannot be the anointing of the Holy Spirit, because it's almost always absent of the necessary relationship of God and His beloved Son. Or, it accepts the Son, but not the Son who is a divine and eternal part of the Godhead, who came in the flesh as a unique God/Man manifestation, and suffered death vicariously on behalf of all those whom the Father had given to Him.

In verse 22 John uses the antichrist as the ultimate type of liar, asking who indeed is a liar if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah? If this isn't a liar then what is? Can there be a bigger lie than to deny Jesus Christ as the Son of God? And to do so is to associate oneself with the father of lies, who is also called the antichrist. There can be no more serious deception or perversion of truth than to deny the Son of God as both divine and human, as both Lord and Savior of all creation. And all those who have the anointing of God are impervious to these deceptions. Oh yes, sometimes very clever speakers can create temporary deviations among the weak or unlearned, but our gift of saving faith

is protected by the power of God, (1Pe 1:5) and none will fall away totally or eternally from that divine truth about Jesus Christ, bestowed by God's grace, through saving faith. (Jn 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Phi 1:6)

John goes on in verse 22 to connect the denial of either the Son or the Father as a denial of both. It's like the lyrics to an old song about Love and Marriage, that says "*this I tell you brother, you can't have one without the other.*"

And regarding the Father and His beloved Son Jesus, the holy scriptures tell us without apology or reservation, that we can't have one without the other. Now you can believe this or you can not, you can object to your heart's content, you can argue about its exclusivity and fairness to mankind, but you can't deny or argue that it is the unmistakable teaching of holy scriptures. (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1Jn 2:23, 5:12)

In verse 23 John says that whoever denies the Son does not have the Father, and conversely, whoever confessed the Son has the Father also. This further cements the inseparability of that relationship. And as we quoted earlier from Colossians chapter 1, it's this love relationship between the Father and His Son that prompted Him to create the universe, and all that it contains, especially mankind, who was made to be His mate and companion, and loyal worshipers for all eternity. That's why mankind has been promised eternal life, because we're to use that eternal life to serve and please God and His beloved Son Jesus.

Do you realize how many people think its because God thinks mankind is something special and deserves eternal life? Isn't that absolutely insane? Have we ever read Romans 3:10-18? That's what God thinks of mankind, stated in His own words, and if it weren't for His love for his Son, mankind would have a very different future. But, because mankind was created for Jesus, as a love gift for Him from His Father, a remnant of mankind has been redeemed and spared from eternal destruction, but not because of us, but because of Christ Jesus. How come we don't recognize this and behave accordingly? The short answer, all those who really have the anointing recognition of God, the gift of saving faith, do recognize this, and strive with all our strength to demonstrate it every day of our lives. But the sheer volume of tares among the wheat obscure the view.

We very often hear people argue that everyone has a "right" to choose their own path to God. As if God had no right to dictate that path Himself. How can God be so restrictive, that's downright presumptuous, and maybe even a little arrogant, after all, who does He thing He is, God? Oops, that argument doesn't work does it? But still, you might argue, shouldn't we all get to choose our own ways and means to come into a relationship with God? Our human reasoning, and sense of self importance tell us that we should have this right; but the holy scriptures tell us something very much different. We don't understand the true nature of this relationship between us and the God who made us. Let me give you an example:

We see ourselves as basically good and innocent pilgrims on our journey through life, seeking along the way to come into a loving relationship with the invisible God who made us. Since we can't see Him or talk directly with Him, we each do our best to find a relationship to Him by being kind to others and restraining our behaviors to the best of our ability. And if we do this reasonably well then we may rightly expect to find His favor at the conclusion of our lives. So, there's no particular single path or way, but each one does the best they can to find God. This is a very popular concept, and that's because it's logical to the human mind, and absent of anything to the contrary, it makes good sense and soothes our consciences. But there is credible evidence to the contrary, and the holy scriptures portray a very different relationship between God and his creatures.

The holy scriptures portray mankind as a rebellious species who has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23) We are born from our mother's wombs into a species that has already been condemned to death for their sin of disobedience to God. (Rom 5:12, 6:23) We are already dead in sin and trespass of God's authority, and rather than being innocent and good pilgrims on a journey of life, we are a species of condemned criminals, awaiting a sentence of death and destruction for our sins. That's the biblical portrayal of the existing relationship of man to God. (Further Expound)

Now these are two very, very different perspectives. If the former is correct then we may very well have many choices in life; but, if the latter is correct, as declared in the holy scriptures, then we most certainly need to know that, as frightening as it might be. Because, for this latter situation, a **singular** and **exclusive** means of forgiveness for our guilt has been

made available, but it's His unique way, or, no way at all. The terms of any pardon that might be offered are solely at the discretion of the Judge. We don't get to make our own offer of terms under this situation, we're just overwhelmingly grateful that any terms are available at all, and overjoyed to accept them, whatever they might be. You see how different these two perspectives are of the relationship between God and mankind? The former is from man's own reasoning and intuition, the latter is from the holy scriptures. And they are as different as night is from day.

One must realize their true condition to rightly comprehend their options. If one has a terminal disease they need to know that to make the right choices of treatment. And they might endure things they otherwise wouldn't if they know the severity of their illness and the full consequences of their choices. If the physician tells them they must refrain from various things or they'll die, then they might very well listen and obey those instructions, when they wouldn't if they thought there was no immediate danger.

When the scriptures tell us that those who deny the deity, or Lordship authority, or human incarnation, or bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, do not have the Father, then that's a very significant bit of information isn't it? If it's true, then it's the difference between heaven and hell, between life and death, between eternal happiness and eternal damnation. Ignore this truth at your own peril says the holy scriptures. But truth it is, regardless of our acceptance or our agreement.

If your religious system denies any of those essential tenets, even a single one, then you don't have Christ the Son, and you don't have God the Father, so says the Apostle John in this inspired biblical epistle. If your religious system is one of those pseudo-Christian offshoots, that has left the orthodoxy of scriptures, like those John described in the preceding verses 17-19, then you left behind the real Jesus Christ, and by consequence the Father also, in favor of a false religion that will leave you in eternal damnation. It would be cruel and heartless to tell you otherwise, and that's what John is doing in this epistle.

There is no salvation, in any way, shape, or form, apart from hearing the gospel and receiving it by the gift of saving faith. Paul put it into precise sequence in chapter 10 of his epistle to the Romans, verses 8 through 15. Salvation involves hearing the truth preached, and believing that truth in our hearts, which we then confess with our mouth unto the salvation of our souls. And the accurate assessment of, and belief in, Jesus Christ is the content of this saving truth that Paul describes in those verses.

There is no religious system in the universe that can end up in salvation but that of the gospel of Jesus Christ, including, but not necessarily limited to, His eternal divinity, His bodily incarnation, His perfect sinless life, His crucifixion and death on a cross, and His bodily resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven with God the Father. Not one of these tenets are negotiable. And with these are the many and diverse truths that issue forth from these. Like His absolute authority and Lordship, His assigned task of judging the entire universe, as the Father has assigned Him this right and this duty.

Ironically, everyone who has denied Him will find themselves at the Great White Throne of judgement answering to Him for their eternal dissolution. The very One whom they denied will now hold their eternal fate in His hands. There'll be little room for denial then, only the realization of a sure and certain judgement of eternity in the burning Lake of Fire. It will indeed prove to be a true statement by the writer of Hebrews, that it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And they got there by rejecting the truth of Jesus Christ in favor of their love for sin.

We have a popular saying that "ignorance of the law is no excuse." Meaning that those who break the law are guilty whether they knew it was illegal or not, because it's been judged to be the responsibility of every person to become knowledgeable as to the legality of their behaviors, and failing to exercise due diligence vacates their claim of innocence. We've been given the holy scriptures, and there are missionaries all over the world, and Bibles are available to the vast majority who want one, so any claims of ignorance of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and His unique and exclusive call for repentance from sin and faith in Him is not a very good defense to offer when summoned to the Great White Throne of Judgement. He who has an ear, let him hear said Jesus, and implicit in that statement is that those who don't have an ear to hear it will suffer the consequences for it.

In verse 24 John again makes reference to those whom he had previously described as leaving the church because they were never really of the church to begin with. They went out for just this reason, to demonstrate that they were never really in. (vv 17-19) And the issues that caused this separation were their insistence on teachings that denied the essential tenets of the faith. They denied Christ's bodily, flesh and blood incarnation, and they insisted that they could practice sin and immorality with their bodies without sinning in their spirit. Can you image what kind of testimony this would portray of Jesus Christ, if those who claim to be His followers openly practiced all kinds of gross immorality and lusts? Is that the light of Christ that is set on a hill to illuminate all humanity? What an evil and absurd inclination, and obviously straight from Satan.

Then John compares those who left, with those who stayed. He says, as for you, let that truth which you heard from the very beginning, that truth about Jesus Christ, and all those essential tenets that define His divinity and holiness, let that abide in you. Let that live in you, and define who you are, and how you think and speak and behave. What you learned in the beginning, hold onto for dear life, for these are those truths that brought salvation to you and your brothers and sisters in the first place, and they will likewise sustain you for the duration of your lives, if you hold them fast and don't stray from them. If you abide (persevere and continue) in that teaching that you heard and believed in the beginning, that truth attested to by the anointing of God, you will have the Son, and you will have the Father also, and you will never perish. So says the Apostle John to the beloved church of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

There will continue to be false religions, and pseudo-Christian religions, until the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. If we're diligent to accept our responsibility to know the truth, and spend time making ourselves knowledgeable of it, then we can usually recognize them by their various, and usually subtle, twisting and perverting of the scriptures. Almost every new church nowadays is created because of some unique perspective, or popular trend. That old time religion of the reformation, or the Puritans, or the great awakening, is barely recognizable on today's broad landscape, if you can even find one at all.

And, then there will be those who continue to see life as a pilgrimage of kind souls, and each has a right to find his own path to God. If these wouldn't listen to Jesus, then they won't listen to you or I either. But saints, keep in mind that it's through the continued pure and accurate and unedited preaching of the gospel, that every soul predestined by God will eventually come to saving faith and repentance of sin. And it is through the continued pure and unedited and accurate exposition of scriptures that every child of God will be brought to maturity, brought into conformity to the stature of Christ Jesus. (Eph 4:13)

In the meantime, we are rebuked, reprov'd, exhorted, and taught by the preaching of the word of God, and we'll be opposed, and even persecuted for doing so, which is God's way of purifying the church and maturing and authenticating our faith. But the true believers, those who have God's anointing of recognition upon them through the gift of saving faith, these will continue to abide in those divine truths about Jesus Christ that we heard from the beginning, and in this we are assured that we will eternally have both the Son and the Father, in that eternal kingdom of perfect righteousness.

To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen

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