

## Antichrist Versus Anointing

1 John 2:18 – 27

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**Main idea:** The anointing we had teaches us to discern between those things that are against Christ and his teachings.

### Introduction

All my life I grew up around Pentecostalism. I have been a Pentecostal since before I was born. It is something I understand and know well and have fully accepted. Throughout my years as I attended church, I heard more sermons than you can count on the anointing. And that is the subject of our passage today in First John. Some of the sermons that I heard growing up made it sound like this almost mystical thing. When I hear non-Pentecostals talking about the anointing, it leaves much to be desired. So what is the anointing and how does it work in a Christian's life? John is going to tell us a little bit about the anointing today.

Text – 1 John 2:18 – 27

**18** Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. **19** 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 it might become plain that they all are not of us. **20** But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. **21** I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. **22** Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. **23** No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. **24** Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. **25** And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life. **26** I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. **27** But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

**I.** We live in the last days (vv. 18 – 20).

**A** The spirit of antichrist is all around us.

**1** John refers to “the last hour” and uses a familiar term for the eschaton was the end of time. He is talking about these days that are the last before Jesus' return.

- 2 One of the queues for John to tell his children this is that there are false teachers roaming about the church and being accepted to give the false doctrines.
- 3 One of terms that John uses for false teachers unique to his letters is the term “antichrist.” This term simply refers to these false teachers in the Greek text as those who are against Christ.
- 4 Many people like to make a distinction between the the antichrist, as in the man of lawlessness and was coming in the end to roll the earth, and the plural form referring to anyone who teaches false doctrine.
- 5 John makes a distinction between these two right off the bat. He takes the idea of this person who is against Christ and all that he will do in the end times and uses the idea of being against Christ to talk about false teachers in their day and in the church today.
- 6 John also finds it necessary to explain the separation between the apostles and their teaching in these antichrists in their false teaching. The apostles are separating themselves because they offer the true teaching of Christ while these false teachers challenge the true teaching of Christ.
- 7 In the antichrist then concerns those who teach against what Christ is talk. Any of their teachings would be subject to direct opposition to Christ’s teachings and the teachings of the apostles whom he gave authority to teach.
- 8 John makes it painstakingly clear that these false teachers went out from the apostles because they disagreed with the apostles’ teaching. The apostles did not take them out of the church but they left on their own.
- 9 **Application:** False teachers and false teaching do not have a place in the church of God. They will not feel comfortable within the walls of the true church. Their false teaching grades against the years of the saints. The Saints know true teaching. We must not allow false teachers to get comfortable in the church. They will not feel comfortable as long as we do not allow them a place where they do not belong. All too many times the Saints allow themselves to listen to false doctrines and even give them a sense of appeasement. Do not listen to false teaching of any kind. Make it feel uncomfortable in the church.

**B** Having the anointing makes us discerning of lies.

- 1 In verse 20, John counteracts the falsity of the false teachers by telling everyone that they have an anointing that stands against the antichrists of their day.

- 2 This anointing is an interesting approach used by John. Throughout the Old Testament, at least three offices regularly practiced anointing as part of their coronation or initiation.
- 3 The word anoint speaks of the imagery of being smeared or spackled usually with oil. In the sacrificial system, the altar would be smeared or spackled with blood from the sacrificed animal.
- 4 Prophets, priests and kings were regularly anointed with oil as they began to serve in their office. Anointing was originally done as an act of initiating service unto the Lord. The anointing with oil represented the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out their office with his power.
- 5 John speaks of an anointing for every single Christian that is received at salvation. This anointing is slightly different from that of the Old Testament. It carries the idea of a knowledge for every believer that helps them discern the truth from lies.
- 6 John will clear up our understanding of his usage of the anointing. This anointing comes from the Holy One. We are to understand the Holy One as Jesus Christ.
- 7 John tells us that not only do we have this anointing, but the inmates power of this anointing helps us to either “know all things” or “everyone has knowledge.”
- 8 The grammar of these two words in Greek leaves it to context to figure out which one is correct. Later on, John will tell us that we know all things. This idea of all must be understood in the context to not mean that we know everything there is to know but that we know all things as it concerns true doctrine.
- 9 **Application:** Jesus left us with an innate sense of what is true and what is false when it comes to a knowledge of God. We are not left to her own devices but have the power of the Holy Spirit inside of us. The Holy Spirit teaches us what we need to know so that we can avoid doctrinal errors and falsities. The Holy Spirit teaches us as we shall see in the coming verses. Do not be afraid that she will follow strange doctrines. The Holy Spirit teaches you what is true so you can see the false things when they come about. We know the real thing so with the counterfeit comes we see it for what it is.

## II. We must know the truth (vv. 21 – 25).

### A The spirit of antichrist goes against the truth.

- 1 John is the first and only New Testament writer to use the term antichrist. He uses this to refer to several ideas. Every single one of them deals with falsities added to Christ’s teaching.

- 2 The first antichrist that John refers to is the person that Satan will use to take power in the end times. Satan will back this false teacher who claims to be Jesus.
- 3 Second idea for antichrist he uses as a plural for all false teachers who perverts and twist the gospel of Jesus Christ. These can be any number of individuals who violate the teaching of Jesus. They usually want to infiltrate the church and church leadership.
- 4 Finally, John speaks of anything that raises its head against the truth of the gospel. In other places throughout his writings John has spoken of the world system that is set up against Christians. In the same definition antichrist could be the whole world system against Christians now.
- 5 John makes the point that in his writing of this letter, one of his purposes is to encourage the believers that they know the truth and they know how to deal with these false teachers.
- 6 In John's day, he is specifically referring to the Gnostic teachers. These teachers claim several ideas that were against the message and person of Jesus Christ. They taught that Jesus was not actually in his own body. Thus he did not actually die. They had trouble with the idea of God.
- 7 They would also use Greek philosophy infused with Christian teaching to create half-truths that made it work like to identify the false teaching they were peddling. They claimed that the flesh was evil and a person could not help sinning in the body. Thus, the physical symptoms of a person did not count against them. They would essentially use this false teaching as a reason for sinning in the body.
- 8 But John was telling the Christians in Ephesus that's these teachers are wrong. No matter what kind of sinning we do, it is always against Christ and his teachings. We need to confess that said and hit head-on.
- 9 This false teaching of the Gnostics permeated the church throughout the first and second centuries especially. They would write books with false titles and false authors. Through these books called the pseudepigrapha meaning "false writings." The church recognizes these false writings for what they are. It always has denied these writings as true and threw them out of the New Testament canon.

**B** The anointing teaches us to see false teaching.

- 1 But how is it that the church is not these are false writings and false teachings? John is going to clarify what he means by "the anointing." The anointing is the engine by which we recognize false teaching.

- 2 We come to receive knowledge in several ways. One of the ways we receive knowledge is through logic and common sense. This is one of the ways that John shows us how we can know the truth.
- 3 It is imperative that Christians read the Scriptures and know them. Without a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, it is hard to identify counterfeit, half-truths and false teachings of various kinds. One of the reasons that Christians are full by false teaching is that they do not study the Scriptures to show themselves approved.
- 4 Another way that we know the truth is through listening to godly teaching that follows the Scriptures. One of the most interesting groups in the book of Acts was the Bereans to listen to Paul teach and then checked his teachings with the Scriptures.
- 5 One more way that we know the truth is through the anointing that Jesus gives us. When we are smeared with the Holy Spirit and he is dwelling within us, he teaches us what is true because he is the Spirit of Truth.
- 6 This anointing teaches us through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. When we hear bad teaching and false teaching we get a sense that it is not right. We may not know exactly why, but we do know it is wrong. The Holy Spirit is guiding us to the truth. The Holy Spirit always testifies truthfully about Jesus Christ.
- 7 **Illustration:** when I was in seminary, I presented a case of false teaching to one of the psychology students. When she listens to the teaching, she immediately told me that something was wrong and that it was not right. When I asked her to explain why she would say that she could not give me a theological answer. She was much range in theology like I was so that she could identify exactly what's false teaching what's in its origin in his. But she still knew was wrong.
- 8 How did she know that it was wrong? Because when she got saved just like the rest of us, she received the seal of the Holy Spirit and he told her that it was not right. This is the anointing that John is referring to.
- 9 **Application:** even though most Christians are not trained in theology so that they can identify exactly what's wrong with heresies and false teachings, every Christian receives the Holy Spirit at salvation. The Holy Spirit speaks to us and tells us when we are seeing or hearing false teaching. This is how we can know all things about our salvation. The Holy Spirit is our teacher through promptings because he dwells in us and testifies only to the truth and not two lines about Jesus. We can be confident that we know good teaching when we study the Scriptures and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

### III. We have an anointing to know the truth (vv. 26 – 27).

#### A The anointing abides in us.

- 1 John teaches us that the Holy Spirit teaches us. He stresses that those who teach false doctrines are liars against the truth. He talks about the Fellowship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 2 Agreeing with his first chapter in which he talks about the Fellowship between the God and Christians based on truth and righteousness John once again tells us that we “abide” with the members of the Trinity.
- 3 This word for abide is a very important word that John commonly uses in his teachings. It is a very important and strategic word in the Greek language.
- 4 The word “abide” has several synonymous meanings that help us to understand what John expects of this anointing that abides within us. These symptoms are “to remain” and “to stay.”
- 5 Please help us understand that the word abide is not just going to live inside of us but also to remain inside of us and to stay with us. There is a chaining of the anointing of the Holy Spirit to the Christian so that the truth would remain within each of us.
- 6 This abiding of the Holy Spirit who only tells us the truth and the Christian is this anointing that John speaks of. Because the person of the Holy Spirit dwells within us, we have a direct connection to Jesus who told us that he is the true (John 14:6).
- 7 This power of the abiding anointing of the Holy Spirit shows us how we can know the truth. His promptings teach us how to recognize good and godly biblical teaching so that we know when false teachings and counterfeits arise.
- 8 Having this abiding presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us teaches us about those who deceive us. We can see through the deception of false teachers and antichrists in our day because of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 9 **Application:** the Holy Spirit abiding in us and teaching us the truth from the false keeps us from being deceived by the enemy and his minions. Because we know the person of truth and have the testimony of his Spirit we can stand up against our deceivers. They have no power over us because we know the truth. This gift of knowing the truth of God cannot be understated because it has such power to keep us from the bondage of false teaching. But we must stand up under this power that God has given us and not allow false teachers to deceive the Church.

#### B The anointing teaches us the truth.

- 1 The anointing that we have teaches us all things about our understanding of Scripture in theology. We must be very careful here and not misunderstand John.
- 2 The Holy Spirit is the one who illuminates the understandings of Scripture to us. He shows us how to interpret the Scriptures properly and truthfully. This is the key to seeing false doctrine for what it is.
- 3 When John says that the anointing teaches us all things that we have no need for teachers, he is referring to false teachers here. The “all things” that we are taught has to do with Christian teaching.
- 4 The anointing of the Holy Spirit’s teaches us to see good and godly teaching and listen to it. The anointing does not mean that we can make up our own interpretations and ignore good teachers because we do not like their interpretation.
- 5 The anointing is not some kind of Star Wars force that allows us to ignore and contradict good and godly teaching. When we do not like the godly teaching we hear, it is most likely because it is for us and must be applied to our lives. Perhaps we are in sin and do not realize it until we hear godly teaching on that subject.
- 6 The anointing is God’s internal ability to recognize false teaching and false teachers as false. This anointing does not give us the right to tell people what proper teaching is that to recognize what improper and false teaching is.
- 7 We have a great need for good teaching the church especially for new Christians who are still learning the truth of God’s Word. The problem is with false teachers who infiltrate the church. These are the ones that the anointing guards against.
- 8 John is telling us that we don’t need anyone to teach us how to innately know right from wrong teaching. We are to listen to teaching and be able to judge whether or not it agrees with Scripture and the Holy Spirit dwelling within us testifies to its truthfulness.
- 9 **Application:** when we hear bad teaching or false teaching in the church, this intimate sense of right and wrong teaching testified to the Holy Spirit himself gives us the confidence and the understanding to keep from practicing false teaching that offends God. We know the truth because we know the person of truth in the Holy Spirit. Aside from the Holy Spirit, we have the teachings of Scripture and other Christians around us to know the truth very well and better than us whom we can ask about false teachings. God has given us all of the tools that we need to be able to recognize false teaching and call it out for what it is.

## Conclusion

When we hear of false teaching from antichrists we stand up against the teachings of our Lord Jesus, we can see them for what they are because the antichrist cannot stand up against the anointing of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This anointing is a special mechanism that God has placed within each of us so that the Holy Spirit can teach us the truth. Because we know the truth so well, we can recognize false teachings of those who wish to infiltrate the Church of God and try to destroy from within. When we hear a false teachings, the Holy Spirit testifies against them by showing us the truth. He keeps us from following false doctrines and shows us how to combat them with the truth of God's word. We can boldly confess the truth because of the Holy Spirit. Don't ever be afraid that she will fall into false doctrine if you are listening to the prodding of the Holy Spirit. God has given you the tools to recognize and defeat and the liars can testify against Christ. Thank God that he is not left us to try to figure these things out on our own. But he walks with us and dwells within us and testifies to the truth. Thank God for his Holy Spirit dwelling within us!