

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

I John Lesson 6

I John 2: 18-27

return pages 7 & 8 only

The Test of truth

True Christians accept as truth that Jesus is the Christ.

Related reading: John 8:12-59; I Corinthians 2; Colossians 1

In case you haven't noticed, religion is alive and thriving in the United States. Bookstores are bursting with volumes about all varieties of spiritual experiences. Church buildings of all descriptions are being constructed. Television, which for many years avoided religious themes, has taken a new interest in depicting numerous religious approaches to life. Talking about religion in public no longer bears the stigma that it did just a few years ago.

Nevertheless, much of the religious language that we hear is far removed from the truth of Scripture. People talk easily about a divine force, or they speak in general terms about God, but rarely does their attention focus on Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Who died to provide salvation from sin. Generalized religion is acceptable in our society, but commitment to Jesus Christ is quite a different matter.

In the first century, John's readers faced a similar situation. The false teachers of their day were undoubtedly religious, but they failed to speak truthfully about JESUS CHRIST. Some of them had previously identified themselves with the Christians, but then they turned away from the truth into error. By their teaching, they were trying to seduce the true believers away from Christ.

In I John 2:18-27, John developed the third mark of genuine Christians, the test of truth. It is not good enough to be religious. It is not good enough to speak of God. Real Christians hold to the truth that Jesus Christ is just Who He claimed to be The Son of GOD. Only those who accept JESUS CHRIST truly know God the Father. Those who deny JESUS CHRIST have also denied the Father.

Stay on Your Guard

Parents know that it is crucial to teach children how to tell the difference between what is good and what only appears good. For example, what a child may see as a delicious berry can actually be poisonous. Or that lovely plant that the child grasps may just be poison ivy! Appearances can often be deceiving, so it is important to learn to stay on guard.

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As John wrote the letter of 1 John, he wanted to warn his Christian readers about some threats to their spiritual lives (2:18). No doubt the Christians already knew that in the future the Antichrist will arise in rebellion against God and His people. They did not, however, realize that antichrists exist during every period of history. Because of this threat, John told the Christians that theirs was a time of great urgency "the last time."



Scripture memorization

1 Jn 2:27

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

(KJV)

John called the false teachers antichrists because they denied that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Messiah promised by God. Jesus Himself predicted that false teachers would arise, denying the truth about Him (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22). Before the first century drew to a close, His prophecy was beginning to be fulfilled.

The false teachers apparently had at one time identified with the true believers, because John wrote that "they went out from us" (2:19). Perhaps they were presenting themselves as apostles speaking God's truth. Their teaching, however, revealed what they really were. Their denial of Jesus Christ demonstrated that they were not one in heart and mind with John and the other genuine apostles. Had they truly been Christians, they would have taught the truth. Their erroneous teaching demonstrated convincingly that they were frauds.

No doubt the false teachers had an attractive appearance, or else John would not have had to write these words of warning. It was vital for the readers to look beyond the appearance to evaluate the teachers carefully. In spiritual matters, deceptive appearances can be lethal to Christian vitality. Only those who stay on their guard can keep standing for the truth and for Christ.

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Knowing the Truth

The false teachers claimed to have superior knowledge, because they denied the gospel truth and in its place they substituted their own doctrine. Their persuasive words and attractive arguments, however, were only the false front of error. In reality, it was the Christians who knew the truth; the false teachers proclaimed a lie.

When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell his or her life. One of the key functions of the Holy Spirit is His teaching ministry to the believer. As Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, the Holy Spirit guides the Christian into all truth, communicating even the deep things of God.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is not limited to a few select individuals; it is given to all Christians. Neither is the Holy Spirit's teaching limited to a few areas of knowledge; it encompasses the full range of God's truth. The false teachers had tried to argue that they had a special source of knowledge unavailable to everyone, but John's explanation of the teaching by the Holy Spirit showed how faulty they were. By teaching doctrine different from what God teaches through His Word and His Spirit, the false teachers revealed themselves as heretics, not as proclaimers of the truth.

Although the antichrists had worked hard to seduce John's readers away from the truth of Christ, John was confident that his readers had held firm (2:21). He did not write to them as though they were unbelievers who did not know the truth, but as genuine believers in Christ.

What Is the Real Issue?

In verse 21 John contrasted, in general terms, the truth taught by the Holy Spirit and the lie taught by the false teachers. In the following verses John clarified the issue by defining the lie being taught. Earlier he had called the false teachers antichrists; in verses 22 and 23 he explained why that was an appropriate term to describe them. Their lie struck at the very heart of the Christian faith, because they denied that Jesus is the Christ. By this denial, they rejected that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, Who came to earth as God manifest in the flesh the Saviour of the World. And, therefore, they also rejected that Christ's death on the cross was substitutionary for humans, that it was the payment for their sins.

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is more than a good man and a great teacher. He is GOD, Who took on human flesh so that He could die as the perfect substitute for sinful humanity. John's readers faced the threat of false teachers who denied the deity of Christ.

John was quick to state that anyone who denies JESUS CHRIST cannot have a genuine relationship with GOD. Salvation comes only through JESUS CHRIST (Acts 4:12), for no one comes to the Father except through

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Him (John 14:6). Denying JESUS CHRIST and accepting God cannot go together any better than oil and water do.

Many people throughout history, and certainly today, want to believe that Jesus was a good man and a fine example to follow. At the same time, however, they reject that He is GOD, and they do not accept that salvation is only through personal faith in JESUS CHRIST. They are repeating the lie of the first-century false teachers.

The real issue in John's day, as well as in ours, is what one thinks of JESUS CHRIST. Only those who believe that He is the "Son of God, GOD manifest in the flesh:, Who died, was buried and rose again, are holding the truth. Any denial of the deity of JESUS CHRIST is a lie that undermines the whole system of Christian faith.

Popular antichrists of the 21st century

Benny Hinn, Kenneth Hagen, Kenneth Copland, Robert Shuller

The Bible is clear, that it is acceptable with GOD to call these antichrists by name see 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:14; here is a prime example of a man who started out in the truth and then turned away later, see also John 8:44. In the day we live in no one wants to draw the line between hot and cold, black and white. Most professing Christians today operate in the realm of gray, this type of Christianity makes GOD sick to HIS stomach. If a great notable Bible teacher makes a prophecy that the Lord will return in 1988, then he is a false teacher, an antichrist. If a great healer claims that he went into a hospital in Canada and healed everyone in the cancer ward, to promote his book and he was found to have never even set foot in that Hospital or did he ever heal anyone, then he is a liar, he is a antichrist. If a great orator, gown wearing, degree holding man stands in a pulpit and says that he has had a Revelation from GOD that you will not find in the Holy Bible, then that man is a liar, an antichrist. If a man is a pulpit says he has been given a special anointing of God to heal you, he is a liar, he is an antichrist. Don't be deceived!!

Luke 6:26

26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

(KJV)

Continuing in the Truth

Many people are good at starting things, but they find it harder to finish. They break their New Year's resolutions before January 31. They abandon

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their well intended plans for diet and exercise. They only partially complete home improvements.

In our spiritual lives, as in every other area of our lives, it is crucial to learn to continue. We must continue after a good start if we are to enjoy a good finish for Christ. In 1 John 2:24 John used three words to emphasize and reinforce his point. By saying "abide, remain, and continue", John made it quite clear that continuing in God's truth is vital to our spiritual stability.

Advertisers and journalists know that people like to hear something new and different. God, however, has given to us His gospel truth once and for all. Instead of seeking the kind of novel teaching that the antichrists preach, God's people need to let God's unchanging truth abide and remain in them.

Continuing in God's Word is the only way to continue in fellowship with God. As Jesus stated in John 14:6, He is the way, the truth, and the life. "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me". There is only one truth, all other messages concerning access to GOD the Father are error. There is only one way to God, all other paths lead away from Him.

As we continue in God's truth, we have His promise of eternal life. The eternal life that God gives comes through JESUS CHRIST alone (John 17:3). In the past, God gave His unchanging truth in His Word. In the present, we must continue in His truth. God's Word promises us eternal life in the future.

Keeping on the Path

Some people have the mistaken idea that after a person accepts Christ as Saviour, problems disappear and life becomes easy. John had a quite different message. He warned us that we must expect powerful opposition as we seek to keep on the path of God's truth. He had already referred to the opponents as antichrists and liars. In verse 26 (1 John 2) he described them as seducers who were trying to lead God's people astray from a pure commitment to JESUS CHRIST.

We cannot avoid spiritual conflict and challenges, but we do not have to face them in our own resources. Instead, God has given to each Christian the gift of HIS Holy Spirit (v. 27). The Spirit comes to indwell each believer, and one of His key ministries is to teach us God's truth.

The false teachers in John's day, as well as false teachers today, declared error that sounds attractive. The Holy Spirit, however, always teaches God's truth. He never speaks of himself (John 16:13). He never teaches in a way that leads away from Christ. His teaching is a reliable defense against error.

Coaches often tell their athletes that the best defense is a good offense. God's offense is the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit discloses the truth of God's Word to us, we are fortified against all of the

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attacks of error. If we are faithful in abiding in God's truth, we will not be led astray by the seductive lies of false teaching.

Life applications

JESUS CHRIST is the perfect pattern for our lives. We must set our eyes on Christ if our belief and behavior are to be right.

Many false teachers sound as though they hold that Jesus was a good, and even great, man. Nevertheless, we need to probe what they really think about Him. (1 John 4:1) Anything less than the Bible's teaching that Jesus is the Son of God, GOD manifest in the flesh, means that they do not truly honor Him. Religious talk about Jesus may sound good, but we have to be careful to measure everything we hear by the highest standard of God's revealed truth, The Holy Bible.

notes

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Lesson 6

I John 2: 18-27

The Test of truth

Name _____

1. In I John 2.20, what did John remind the Christians that each believer has?
2. What is the hole in the reasoning of the antichrists?
3. What are the three words John used to understand our commitment to JESUS CHRIST?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. What verse speaks about the Holy Spirit as the anointing?
5. Is religion popular in our world today? How can we tell ?
6. What did JESUS CHRIST provide?
7. Does Holy Spirit bring attention to itself?
8. What is the key verse in this Lesson?
9. If a man makes a prophecy and that prophecy does not come true, then what is that man?
10. Where do antichrists come from?
11. What is the mark of a genuine Christian?
12. Can you truly love GOD and yet deny that JESUS is the Son of GOD, GOD manifest in the flesh and still go to heaven?
13. Name three popular antichrists of the 21st century
14. What was John's focus on JESUS CHRIST?

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True/false

- False teaching almost always centers on a deficient view of Christ.
- JESUS CHRIST is the center of all Christian faith and practice.
- JESUS CHRIST is GOD
- There is truth outside the realm of JESUS CHRIST



Scripture memorization

(write these verse on the back of this page)

1 John 2:27, 1 John 4:1; John 16:13

Any questions on this lesson or any others.