

1 John 2:18-27

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[0 : 00] So we're going to have two readings this evening. We're continuing our series in 1 John. But before we read from 1 John, let's read from Jeremiah 31.

! Jeremiah 31, you'll find that on page 660. Jeremiah 31 and verse 31, on page 660.

And we'll just read to you verse 34. So verse 31 to 34. Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.

[1 : 19] And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord.

For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

For I will forgive their sin no more.

1 John 2, verse 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. They went out from us, but they were not of us.

[2 : 49] For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out. But they went out. That it might become plain that they all are not of us.

But you have been anointed by the Holy One. And you all have knowledge. 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. Who is the liar? No one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the Antichrist.

He who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

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.

[3 : 56] And this is the promise that he made to us. Eternal life. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. But the anointing that you have 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.

This is God's word. Let's pray. Our Father, we do pray that you would teach us from your word.

Not because we do not know it, but because by the Spirit you have taught us the truth. And we pray that we would live in the light of the truth of what we read here.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, of all the questions that we ask every day, and the questions we answer every day, I think the most common one must be, what time is it?

[5 : 09] And if you add up all the numbers, all the number of times that you've asked that question, and the number of times you've answered that question, and add that to the number of times you yourself have checked the time against a watch or a clock, and then add that to the times you've checked the dates or what day of the week it is, I think it's safe to say that one of the things that we think about most is what time it is.

And that makes sense, doesn't it? In many ways, what time it is affects what we do, and it affects what we expect other people to do.

So if I see someone eating breakfast at 7am, that's perfectly normal. I would expect them to do that. But if I see someone eating breakfast around 7pm, that would be a little bit strange, and I might have some questions.

Likewise, if I see someone serving up a three-course meal with a really nice soup and a beef roast and tiramisu, if I see that at 7pm, that makes perfect sense.

If I see somebody doing that at 7 o'clock in the morning, then I'm going to have a few questions, aren't I? It's going to be a little bit strange. And so it matters what time it is. Some of the kids, you were playing a game just after church, what time is it, Mr. Wolf?

[6 : 31] You need to know what time it is to know what to do. If it's 3 o'clock, you take three steps. And if it's lunchtime, then you have to run away. You need to know what time it is.

And John here is saying that you need to know what time it is, and he wants to explain what that means, and what you should expect, given the time.

And so what we're doing tonight, we're taking our second step into the main body of this letter.

We've gone through this introduction, because from the beginning to chapter 2, verse 11, he's emphasized the importance of the apostolic message, that Jesus is the Christ.

They're not two different things. Jesus is the Christ. He is God. He's emphasized that sin is serious, and that the love of God is seen in obedience.

That's been his main teaching in the first section. And he wasn't saying that to rebuke them, but to assure them that they are doing the right thing. This is what you believe, and you should continue in it.

[7 : 38] As opposed to the crowds of people who had left this church recently. So he's assuring them that they are in the right, and these people who had left are wrong.

And that assurance comes in the bridge of verses 12 to 14 in chapter 2, into this main body of the letter. He says you are doing the right thing in that section.

And so in this main body, we took our first step last week, where John gave a warning against loving the world. That is one thing they're in danger of doing.

He explained that they live in a world that is opposed to God. A world that would love for us to love it, above everything, above God even.

But it is a world that is fading. And so he wants to make it very clear that we mustn't love the world, but we must love the Father. And they are two opposing realities.

[8 : 38] We can't do both. And so he gave us that sort of health check to see, am I loving the world, or am I loving the Father? So last week, John was helping him to understand where they live.

And tonight, he thinks it will help them to understand when they live. So that's what we've done.

He's said where they live. And tonight is all about where, when they live.

If you look at verse 18, on the page, children, it is the last hour. That's one of many similar expressions that you'll find throughout the New Testament, but throughout the scripture, actually.

The last day, the last days, the last hour. And it's referring to this period between Christ's first coming and his second coming.

Christ's first coming, 2,000 years ago, and his second coming that is still to come. And it's the last hour because there's nothing else that needs to be done before his return.

[9 : 42] There's nothing more to achieve. This is the last hour. And the main thing he wants to do is to explain what that has to do with them, his readers.

But he prefaces it in these opening few verses with an explanation of what this has to do with the people that left them. These people who cause so much pain and chaos in this church.

He says, one thing you know about this last hour, you've been taught about it, Antichrist will come in this last hour. And he says, no surprise there, these Antichrists were there.

That was true of them. They were opposing the Christ. They were opposing Jesus. That's what happened. In this last hour, these people opposed Jesus.

So he's saying, don't be surprised that this happened. This is precisely what we expect us to see in this last hour. The fact that they left is not a sign, he's saying to these readers, it's not a sign that you are lacking in any way.

[10 : 53] It's a sign that they didn't actually belong here. They were not truly of us. So verse 19, they went out from us, they were not of us. 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. And don't miss the fact that he says, us.

He joins them, in a sense. He says, they left us. They didn't just leave you. You are with me. You are with us, the apostles. You are with the Christian church that is growing throughout the world. They didn't just leave you. They left all of us. We were all left behind by these traitors. So he's very warmly, pastorally telling them, they left us.

But that is not surprising. And the rest of the passage is about what the fact that it's the last days has to do with them, his readers. And it's in three sections.

[12:03] Unfortunately, the translation kind of lets us down. In terms of the meaning, it's perfectly fine. It absolutely tells you what you need to know in terms of the meaning. But the structure doesn't come out very clearly here.

The New American Standard Version gets closer to showing what the structure. But let me just tell you what these structural markers are. So in verse 20, you'll see, but you have been anointed. And that you is emphatic. But as for you, you have been anointed. And then in verse 24, let what you heard from the beginning.

That actually starts, as for you, let what you heard from the beginning. And then verse 27, but as for you, the anointing you received. So this is a perfectly okay translation.

It just disguises the structural markers that John put in. He's emphatic, as for you, in these places. And so that's how we break it down. There's three as for you's that come out throughout the passage.

[13:12] And each section teaches us something different about this last hour. So let's start off with verses 20 to 23. This first as for you.

Where he needs them to understand the tension. Understand the tension. It's one weird thing that he says here, isn't it? I'm teaching you not because you don't know, but because you do know.

You see that in verse 21? I write to you not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it. And because no lies of the truth. If they know, why is he writing to them?

That's the tension of it. The last days are a time where there is a tension between us knowing and us being told.

I'm writing to you because you do know. So these last days, having started with the anointing, that's in verse 20, you have been anointed by the Holy One.

[14:20] The Holy One, if you look through the Gospels, that always refers to Jesus. The Holy One is Jesus who has anointed his people at Pentecost where he poured out the Spirit on his people.

He has anointed his people and therefore they know the truth. Through the Spirit they have come to understand the truth of the Gospel. And yet what they know has been opposed by these false teachers.

And there are two key things we can deduce from what John says. We don't know exactly who these false teachers were. We don't have any writings of theirs. We can't know exactly who they were. But two things we can deduce.

They think they know better. They think they can come to these people and say, well, you don't really understand. Let me explain it to you. Or, they haven't told you the whole story.

Let me tell you the rest of the story. They think they know better. And therefore they think they are better because they know better. And so you'll see he'll often use the word know throughout this passage and throughout the book.

[15:23] So knowing is a key thing. Saying, no, you are the ones who know. Don't be fooled by these people saying you don't really know. And a key thing, we can also see that they were saying that Jesus is not the Christ.

Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. And these probably weren't Jewish teachers saying that he wasn't the Christ. but rather the movement that came to him as Gnosticism. The people who valued being in the know. Knowing. Having this knowledge. And so they would have said that Jesus was a very special man. He was only a man.

And this divine Christ sort of descended upon Jesus. And so Jesus and Christ were two separate things that worked in tandem during those three years of ministry.

And then Christ left Jesus. And so do you note how he's using language of Christ. Christ means anointed one. And so you see lots of language of anointed.

[16:31] So he is the anointed one. And he has anointed you with that same anointing. I think Heidelberg Haskism is really helpful here.

In understanding Christ as the anointed one. And us as his anointed. And I wouldn't be surprised if they were thinking of this passage when they put this together. Heidelberg Catechism 31.

Why is he called Christ? That is anointed. Because he has been ordained by God the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit. To be our prophet and teacher.

Who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption. our only high priest who by the one sacrifice of his body has redeemed us and who continually intercedes for us before the Father.

And our eternal king who governs us by his word and spirit and who defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us. And then the Catechism goes on.

[17:36] Why are you called a Christian? Because I am a member of Christ by faith and thus share in his anointing.

So that I may as prophet confess his name, as priest present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him, and as king fight with a free and good conscience against sin and the devil in this life and hereafter reign with him eternally over all creatures.

So we have received this anointing at Pentecost. And because we have received this, we have come to understand this anointing allows us to believe the gospel as we hear it.

And so there is this tension of you know, but I'm telling you because you know, not because you don't know. So when they heard John versus these false teachers, the false teachers may have wanted to say, well that's just kind of their opinion, you know, there's two options here, and you can decide, but you know, we're both telling you something new, and you need to decide which one is true.

But John is saying, no, no, no, there's not two possible options here, and you need to pick which new bit of knowledge you want. He's saying, you do know this. You know this already, you already have the anointing.

[19:01] You know that Jesus is the Christ. And so I'm telling you because you already know. I'm not telling you, come and believe this new thing, just like they are.

I'm telling you, keep believing what you already believe. So these people will constantly want to tear you away from that, but I'm telling you because you already know this.

You have this anointing, and so understand this tension, that I'm not about telling you something new, but I'm telling you what you know already. And so the last days of time when we need to be reminded of what we already know, not necessarily be told something new all the time.

So understand the tension. Then verses 24 to 26, let the truth remain in you. don't be deceived.

Let the truth remain in you. Don't be deceived. That's what the Antichrist wants to do, is to deceive you, to trick you into believing something else.

[20:11] And so in verse 24, let what you heard from the beginning, this apostolic message that you have always heard, that Jesus is the Christ, let that abide in you.

so if it abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made to us, eternal life.

As Jesus says in his high priestly prayer, what is eternal life? It is to know the Father and Jesus Christ who he sent. And this has all to do with the people trying to deceive them.

So let what you know remain in you, because people will try to deceive you, will try to take you away, will try to feed you lies, will have you believe what is not true.

Let the truth remain in you, and don't be deceived. So that's verses 24 to 26. And then finally verse 27.

[21:15] So let the truth remain in you, and then you remain in him. don't go anywhere else. Remain in him, don't go anywhere else.

So in these last days, not only will people try to deceive you and feed you lies, they will try to convince you that you need more, that you need something else. People will tell you that you need to hear a new teacher, you need to hear other things.

But you'll see in verse 27, that you have no need that anyone should teach you.

It's a bit strange, because isn't John teaching them? But that's part of the tension. He's teaching them what they already know. And I hope you caught that echo there.

You have no need for anyone to teach you from Jeremiah 31. So in Jeremiah 31, we read, And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord.

[22 : 30] The last days are a time when God's people, they know the truth, from the least to the greatest. And so I wasn't at all surprised when even our children, when I told them something that wasn't true, spotted it, and said, no, that is wrong.

Jesus is God. They don't have to be the brightest and the best. It's not only people with the special secret knowledge who know the truth.

Everyone knows the truth, from the least of them to the greatest. So how do we balance this? Well, you don't need anyone to teach you, but John is teaching them. I think he's saying, don't expect any new teaching to come.

Don't expect anything to add to this teaching in this clear allusion to Jeremiah 31. Don't believe anyone who claims to have a higher truth or a new revelation.

Don't believe anyone who says, yes, Jesus said this, but what he didn't mention was whatever it is. Now, that was the case before Jesus came.

[23 : 41] Before Jesus came, there was always more to be said. In Genesis 3 in the garden, all they heard was the seed of the woman will crush the seed of the serpent.

Well, that's not much detail. There's more to be said, isn't there? There was always more to be said. So under Abraham, there was more to be said. Under Moses, there was more to be said.

Under David, there was more to be said. But under Jesus, there is nothing more to be said. He is the final word. He has spoken climactically, so nobody else will come along and say, this is the way to God, this is what God is really like, because he has spoken his final word.

So Jeremiah was a cessationist, and so was John. Not believing in, not that they didn't believe in prophecy at all, but saying, this is how the last days work.

There won't be any new people coming along to give you any new teaching. So you have no need for anyone to teach you, but as his anointing teaches you, as the spirit upon you has led you into all truth, and has made sure that you don't go into the lie, and you can discern lies, even the least of you, just as it has taught you, abide in him.

[25 : 09] So given that you have come to know this truth, abide in him. So let the truth abide in you, and don't be deceived, and remain in him, not going anywhere else, or even expecting anyone else to come along to teach you.

These are the last days, and so remember that tension. you will be living in a time where people will want to deceive you, and will want to tell you there's more, but there is no more.

That's a great thing. What we have is wonderful. If somebody came along and said, well actually you need more than Jesus, that would just crush the truth of Jesus, wouldn't it?

And haven't we seen so many other people rising up, some not getting much of a following, but Muhammad, Joseph Smith, all kinds of people, rising up saying, yes there's more than Jesus.

You need this extra book, you need this extra teaching, you need this extra understanding that the Bible doesn't give you, but I can give it to you. Or, I cracked the code to the Bible, all these numbers, I managed to figure it out.

[26 : 26] No, we have what we need. And so we're not surprised that these false teachers come, we're not surprised that Jesus is opposed in the last hour, but what's the answer?

It is not to be told something new that sort of is just slightly better than the other new thing people are hearing. What we need to hear is what we already know.

What we need is to be taught what we have already been taught. God, let's thank God that we have all that we need to know.

Nobody is lacking in access to the truth of God. There's nobody who is more naturally able to grasp the truth of God.

There's nobody who's better. There's nobody who's really in the know. If you are trusting in Jesus, you are all in the know. You all understand. You have the Spirit living in you.

[27 : 28] So understand that people will come and let that truth remain in you and you remain in him. Don't go anywhere else just as it has taught you.

Abide in Jesus Christ in this last hour. Let us pray.