

1 John

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May 5, 2021



1 John 2:25-29

Vs. 25

- THE promise is eternal life. Jesus did not promise that if you believed in Him your life would be easy. In fact He said it would be hard and at the first, calls us to pick up our cross and follow Him (Matt. 16:24). He did not promise that we would be rich, but instead said that it is the poor who are blessed (Luke 6:20). None of the things the world would consider enticements are to be found in the promises of Jesus. What Jesus promised was eternal life; Forgiveness not judgement; Heaven not Hell; Life not death.

Vss.26-27

- John returns to the "anointing" the people of His churches received from Jesus when they first believed in Him. Again, the image is that of a salve, an unction, that heals the eyes and opens them that the blind may see rightly. Think of Paul/Saul when he met Jesus on the Damascus road. He was blinded and had to be led by hand into the city. Later he was visited by a man named Ananias who was sent by God to lay hands on him. Acts 9:18 says that "something like scales" fell from Paul's eyes and he could see. He could see the need to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. He could see the need to travel as far as he could to share the Gospel. He could see the world rightly, for what it truly is. He could see people rightly. He could see power rightly. This is what John is speaking of here. He says he is writing concerning those who are trying to deceive us. But we can see rightly because of the anointing, the healing of our blindness, that we have received from Christ. We can see the wolves in sheep clothing and not be

destroyed. And we can see and know Truth so we are able to see a lie and recognize it instantly as such.

- The deceiving gnostics arrived saying they had come to teach a new truth. John's point is that we don't ever need a new truth. All we need for eternal life, all we need to live out the rest of our time on earth in the service of Christ has already been given to us by Christ Himself. There is nothing "new" we need. "His anointing teaches you about all things", John says in vs. 27. And you and I have an advantage over John's people for we have the written word to go along with the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit. We *KNOW* the teachings and words of Jesus and can refer back to them as often as we need.

Vss. 28-29

- In vs. 27, and more here in vs. 28, John touches on a key point and one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith. He says, "the anointing which you received from Him abides in you" and goes on to say that "you abide in Him". This harkens back to the benediction Jesus gave in the Upper Room the night He was betrayed, which we find in only in John's gospel (John 17). We call this the High Priestly Prayer. As we look at 1 John 2, the key verses in the Gospel of John 17 are vs. 21: "...even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they may also be in us..." and vs. 26: "...so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them and I in them." This idea of us being "in Christ" and Christ being in us is central to the gospel and the whole of the New Testament. Romans 6:11 says we are "dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1 says, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. 1:2 speaks of those who have been sanctified "in Christ Jesus". In Galatians 2:4 Paul speaks of the liberty we have "in Christ Jesus". Paul tells the Ephesians that we were "created in Christ Jesus for good works...". Paul tell the Philippians in 3:9 that he will obtain the resurrection from the dead because he will be found in Christ. Peter in 1 Peter 3:16 speaks of how our good behavior "in Christ" will put all of our critics to shame.

- In short, the Christian life is a mystical life, whereby the Christian, though still human in all our frailty, live our lives “in Christ” that is, enveloped by the Holy Spirit of Christ, “in whom we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Here then is part of the reason why John in this letter draws such a sharp line between the Christian life and the lives of non-Christians. It is that we ARE IN CHRIST that sets us apart. It is as if we lived on another planet from the rest of humanity. Everything is different. How we see the world is different. This leads to our ethics, values, and mores being different. And not just a little different, John would say, but *dramatically* different, easily distinguishable by even an unredeemed eye. Moreover, not only are we in Christ, but He is in us. He abides with us. All of who He is abides in us, so that His teachings abide in us, His Truth abides in us. His love, the same love with which the Father loved Him, abides in us. Physically, we move through life on this Earth, we breath in its air, we drink of its water, and we eat of its food, so that the very earth itself literally becomes part of who we are (should we be surprised where we hear scientists say that humans and earthworms share roughly 70% of the same genes?!) The same is true of the Christians spiritual life: we live in the Holy Spirit of Christ; we breath Him in; as He said in John 6:56, “He who eats My flesh and drinks my blood abides in Me and I in him”; so that Christ literally becomes part of our DNA to the point that it is impossible to tell where He ends and we begin. We are One in Christ and One with Christ.
- The proof, as John concludes this thought in vs. 29, is in the pudding. If we know that Christ is the very definition of what it is to be righteous, then those who likewise practice the righteousness of Christ is clearly “born of Him”. No one can practice the righteousness of Christ on their own. Apart from God, I can do nothing. Only through the power of Christ in us, and we ourselves in Him, are we able to love our neighbor AND our enemies. Only in this way can we sincerely look to those who are crucifying us and say, “Father forgive them.”