

# 1 John – Note 7

## 1 John 2:18-24

Some of what John says in this section is covering familiar ground. He is again emphasizing the importance of obedience to God. This is not because we are saved by doing the best we can. That is a waste of time. Remember the 4-step process. We are saved by repenting of our sins and believing in Jesus and what He has done – and He seals this to us by baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit. BUT – it is because we are so grateful that we are saved, that we therefore obey God and behave properly. If we do not do so, it is proof that we never loved God in the first place. All this we have already covered.

What John does in this section is put this teaching into a context of what is to come. He mixes this teaching with a little prophecy of the end times. Obviously, there is a lot more to say about the end times. If there weren't, then we wouldn't need another of John's books – Revelation.

In verse 18, John mentions Antichrist. He also mentions antichrists – plural. What is the difference?

At the end of the age, shortly before Jesus comes back again, there will be someone else who looks and acts rather like Jesus. This is the Antichrist. He will actually be the devil incarnate in human form. But to a lot of people, he will seem to be a man of peace, and will seem to be just like Jesus – yet he will be a deceiver. John is emphasizing that we should watch for this person. You all know that there are a lot of people who attend churches week by week who are not really Christians. A lot of these people will be fooled by the Antichrist. They will end up worshipping him. There will even be whole churches and pastors who follow the Antichrist.

But John also says that there are antichrists – small a, plural. These are people of great evil, who are great leaders, who also seem to some people to have a Christ-like or Messianic quality. They are not the actual antichrist, but they are similar. But the actual Antichrist will be much worse. We can all think of such people, who appeared to some at the time to be godly, but turned out to be dangerous and evil. Emperor Constantine X, Genghis Khan, Napoleon I, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin... all of these were antichrists. You might be able to add to that list, from your knowledge of history.

Then we read about those people who are fooled by either Antichrist or the various antichrists. In verse 19, we are reading about people who seem to be Christians, but are not. These are people in churches, who seem to be Christians, but who will follow antichrists. “They went out from us, but were not of us.” They seemed to be Christians. They seemed to be in the church. But they were not really Jesus' people. You probably all know people like this. Have you met someone who said “I used to be a Christian, but now I don't believe in God.” This is like someone who says “I met Paul Taylor, but now I don't believe he exists.” It is illogical. If you have really met a person, you can't deny his existence, even if you decide you no longer like them. If you really know God, you can't stop believing in Him. God is not a philosophy. He is a real person. All three of you have seen real answers to prayer, that are not possible without God. You know He is who He says. It would be illogical to stop believing in Him.

John contrasts this false faith with real faith. He says “You have an anointing from the Holy One and you know all things.” Anointing is related to the word ointment. This in turn is related to the idea of oil – which in the Bible does not mean engine oil – it means olive oil. Anointing with this oil (pouring it on the head) was symbolic of the giving of the Holy Spirit. So, when John says that they are anointed, he

is referring to the baptism (or immersing) into the Holy Spirit. That is why baptism into the Holy Spirit is not an optional extra. You need to be baptized into the Holy Spirit. Josh – that is why we want to go through a Bible study with you and Beth so that you will both know the power of the Holy Spirit in your lives. Jack and Adam – you both know the importance of this teaching. Jack, you have been away from me for quite a while. You need to look into Martyn Lloyd-Jones' teaching on the baptism into the Holy Spirit and act on it. Maybe I should try to send you guys in Wales the notes that Geri and I are preparing for Josh and Beth.

When John says that “you know all things”, he does not expect that you have all knowledge. But you have access to all knowledge! Because you have access to God – and He has all knowledge! That is exciting! John goes on to remind his readers that he is writing because his readers have the truth. He does not believe for one second that they don't know God! He is simply helping them to know Him better.

Into this context, then, John repeats his points about knowing God. He shows that if we deny Jesus, we are liars. After all, antichrists deny Jesus, because they claim to be Him, in a way. This is important. At work, or school, are we embarrassed about being Christians? Then Jesus will be embarrassed to talk about us to His Father! That is hard-hitting. But the opposite is also true – when we acknowledge Jesus, we have the Father also; and this is because of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. So, for the first time, we have all three persons of the Trinity (the One God) mentioned in the one passage.

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Finally – I said I would mention how to use a memorized Scripture verse.

Just bring it to mind in your head. Then ask yourself a couple of simple questions, like these:

1. What does this verse mean?
2. What does this verse mean to me?
3. Does this verse mean anything special for anyone I know, so that I could share it with them?

These special devotional times are not meant to be complicated. Keep them simple. The technical term is meditation. Christian biblical meditation is not the same as Eastern mystical meditation, which you should avoid. Eastern meditation is about emptying your mind, and then the demons can fill it for you. Biblical meditation is about filling your mind. If you can't remember the questions above, just pray quickly in your head that God will show you something He wants to teach you from that verse. Don't worry if you don't think you have learned EVERYTHING from the verse. God can show you something else tomorrow, and something else next week, and something else next year! Just try and focus on one truth from the verse that you have brought to mind, even if it is something you already know. This sort of devotion takes much longer for me to write about than it does for you to do it. This is really short, really fun, but really effective. It probably takes up no more than 10 seconds of your day, or maybe it'll stretch to a couple of minutes. But, if you have a verse memorized, then you need no equipment with you; no Bible, no notebook, no pen, no Bible commentary book. It is just you and the Holy Spirit speaking into your mind. You can do it at any time; driving the car, waiting for the train or bus, or waiting in a checkout line in the grocery store.