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A Letter to Dear Children, Part 7

Last Hour Lessons

Text: 1 John 2:18-23

“It is the last hour”. I have been hearing that phrase since I was a teenager. Even now, I hear people say, “We’re living in the last days”. Recently a person asked me if I believed the second coming of Christ was near. My standard response is that I don’t know *when* He is coming. I only know *that* He is coming. My aim is to live in such a way, that I will be ready when He comes. As far back as the first century, between A.D. 60 and 90, when this epistle was probably written, people were saying, “it is the last hour”.

In our text, John says one of the signs that we are in the last hour, will be the presence of *the* Antichrist and many *antichrists*.

Q: Who or what are antichrists?

A: They are those who are against Christ. An antichrist, however, never looks like one...at first. They were part of the Christian community. They knew the language, the songs and the creeds. Eventually, though, they pulled away. In the language of our text, “they went out from us”.

John wants to tell these first century believers that they don’t have to worry about going in that direction.

**Illus.**

When I was twelve years old, I met Jesus Christ and committed my life to Him. I had, and am having, a real, personal, significant encounter with the son of God. Our union is so strong that I cannot imagine why I would leave my savior...or my faith. He has covered me and continues to draw me in, to an intimate relationship that is nurtured by prayer, bible study, worship, fellowship with other believers and reflection.

I don’t have to live like the antichrists. I am secure in what I’ve got going on, with Jesus. Hear the “But you” of verse 20 as a contrast. In verse 18 there is a description of these “anti”s. But you.... You are not like *them.* You have oil on your heads and God is teaching you. You know some things they (the “anti”s) don’t know. You know that you can *stay* with Christ. You know that when you are serious about God and when He pours his anointing oil on you, you can remain on this spiritual adventure. This NKJV rendering is not the best translation of verse 20. These people are not omniscient. They don’t know all things. Reversing the word order is the best way to understand this verse. Not “you know *all* things”, but, “you all (y’all) *know* things”.

When we walk with God and take our lives in Him seriously, there is a confidence, a knowing, that is ours. John addressed this often in this epistle (2:11, 20, 21, 29; 3:2, 5, 14). Paul emphasizes the concept of the knowledge that believers have, in 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:1, 2, 5,11; 3:3-4).

Three notes:

1. Note the fact of the anointing. We have been “oiled” by God. We have received the *chrisma* of God. In both the Old and New Testaments, anointing was symbolic of the Spirit being received by a person. (1 Samuel 16:13; Isaiah 61:1; 2 Corinthians 1:21-21

**21***Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,* ***22****who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

2. Note the source of the anointing: it is from the Holy One (God). “Holy One” could be understood as God (Habakkuk 3:3) or Jesus (John 6:69).

3. Note the effects of the anointing:

1. The anointing keeps us in place. Just as the anointing was a seal upon the one anointed, we are sealed by the anointing of the Holy One and we are kept in place. Perhaps the secessionists left the faith community because they did not have that anointing which keeps! They went out from the community (v. 19).

B. By and through the anointing, we become knowledgeable. John is not writing to these first century believers in Jesus because they are ignorant of Jesus. Quite the opposite is true. (Because) you all *know* things, guard the truth that has planted in you and give attention to growing in your ability to distinguish truth from lies (v. 21). The anointing changes the way we walk, the way we live. It’s like yeast in bread. When the heat is on, we rise...because of the anointing. The anointing stops our haters in their tracks. When our enemies would do us harm they hear, “Touch not my anointed.”

**Illus.**

The present White House administration has given us some memorable additions to our national cultural lexicon.

* On January 22, 2017, in a Meet the Press interview, Counselor to the President, Kellyanne Conway, talked about “alternative facts”, when referring to the number of people attending President Trump’s inauguration.
* On August 19, 2018,(1n another Meet the Press interview) President Trump’s lawyer, Rudy Giuliani said, “truth isn't truth”.

John is not writing to stamp out some alternative facts or get into an argument about the nature of truth. John is saying we *know* things and we *know* truth and no lie is of the truth.

For John, the center of that knowledge, the advantage of the anointing, is that the believers will have an unshakeable Christology. They will know Jesus! John will say it is not enough to simply believe in God. John’s desire for his dear spiritual children is that they will come to intimately know the Christ, the Anointed One (Acts 4:26). The last verse of the passage we are examining today is a one-verse response to those who would try to separate Christ and God. There are those who want a belief in God. It comforts them. However, they don't want God’s Son, with His “follow Me” invitation and His “no one comes to the Father but by Me” talk. John says, in this last hour it is very important that we understand that God is *in* Christ, bringing the world to Himself. The one who rejects the Son has, in so doing, rejected the Father.

Hear the good news: the ones who say, “yes” to Christ the Son, come to know the Father as well.

We’ re anointed.

We’re appointed.

What a good reminder.

A good lesson in this last hour!

Amen