

Series: 1 John  
Title: If They Had Been of Us  
Text: 1 John 2: 18-28  
Date: October 11, 2018  
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**1 John 2: 18: Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.**

We know we live in the last days because there are many antichrists, as Christ warned there would be. John begins by saying, "*It is the last time*" [hour]." John was old. He was the last of the apostles. John knew his departure was at hand and he warns us the same thing that Paul told the Ephesians elders:

Acts 20: 28: Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29: For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30: Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31: Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Illustration: Rolph Barnard's departure

In John's day many antichrist had already entered. They were scattering the flock and drawing away disciples after themselves with perverse doctrine. They were antichrists, opposed to Christ, adversaries of Christ. But by these antichrists, we know we are living in the last days. Christ said they would come—"as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." The last days began when Christ came in the flesh.

Hebrews 1: 2: [God] Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,...

Brethren, Christ warned us. That means antichrists are under the sovereign rule of God our Savior. The devil sows tares amongst his wheat only by Christ's permission to accomplish his purpose. So as heart-breaking as it is to see professing believers depart from us, know Christ is in control.

John does not speak of antichrist as one person that shall appear in the end of these last days, he said, "*even now are there many antichrists.*" But why does Paul describe antichrist as one man? He is describing the great falling away of men and women who together, as one man, oppose Christ in religion.

Think of Christ and his body: Christ is our Head and the church is his body. When every elect child is called then scripture says we will be one body—"a perfect man, the stature of the fullness of Christ." Yet, that one body, that one man, is made up of many members.

The devil imitates it: the devil is the head opposer of Christ and his body is so united in opposing Christ that they are as one man in opposing Christ. But that one body, that one man, is made up of many antichrists. The devil and his seed are so united in opposition to Christ that *he sits as one man in the temple of God...*

2 Thessalonians 2: 3: Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day [of Christ's return] shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; [here is the common characteristic of the devil and his body] 4: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Indeed, that describes the pope to a T. And the pope is antichrist! But in our day we see the same in so-called churches everywhere preaching the message of will-worship—universal redemption—exalting sinners, putting the works of God in the sinner's hands. The most subtle are those who preach the gospel yet mix in lies, which disannul the truth they spoke. Another subtle antichrist are those who teach the truth but live contrary to this book by making merchandise of men's souls for personal gain, by seeking glory for themselves, by sowing discord among brethren along the way. These are antichrists, too!

This last antichrist is a danger for folks who leave the gospel, thinking they can listen to sermons over the internet. You cannot know a preacher's character from the internet. He may speak smooth words about unity but really be the very man slandering God's people in private, sowing discord, promoting himself for filthy gain. But you will not know it by what he says on the internet. God has his people unite under the gospel together!

So we know we are living in the last days. But take comfort brethren, it is exactly as Christ told us it would be. He is ruling all things well!

**Proposition:** The Spirit of God reminds us in this text that when professing believers leave the gospel it is no loss but a gain to the true church.

**Title:** If They Had Been of Us

## ANTICHRIST COMES FROM US

**1 John 2: 19: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**

This is a scripture folks like to quote when a professing believer leaves *their* assembly and moves to another. That is not what John means. If God's saint leaves one local church where Christ has established his gospel and moves to another where the gospel is preached, they have not gone out from among us.

"*They went out from us*" includes those who leave the gospel to preach or to sit under lies and those who leave for the world who do not assemble at all but separate themselves and live for their lusts.

Preacher, are you saying that believers born of the Spirit of God can fall away? Absolutely not! Then why do preachers and professing believers go out from us?

Christ said some are stony ground hearers.

Matthew 13: 20: But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21: Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

He hears the word and receives it with joy: makes a profession, joins a church, appears zealous for a while. But it is all of his flesh, there is no root in himself. So in time, Christ comes with his winnowing fan and sends a test—it could be that his dearest, nearest family member opposes him calling the church a cult or it could be his will is crossed so that he does not get his way or he has a misunderstanding with a brother or he cannot get the saints to compromise on a certain doctrine. Christ says persecution arises over the word. Perhaps the devil attacks the church on a certain doctrinal point and antichrists begin to slander his brethren and he is afraid he will be next for uniting with them. So Christ forces him to take a stand or depart. By and by he is offended. Oh, he did not leave his job any of those times he was offended there. How many times have you, brethren, been offended at your job? Oh, he sacrificed whatever necessary to keep his business open? After all, that's his life. But antichrist will sit under the gospel only so long. When the time comes to bear the cross of sacrifice and commitment, he's gone.

Christ said others depart who are thorny ground hearers.

Matthew 13: 22: He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

He receives the word and unites for a time. Then he comes into prosperity or gets a promotion or is honored or gets into politics. If he is a preacher perhaps he sees an opportunity for more glory and money at a bigger church but he will have to change his message. Christ said, "*and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*"

Why does Christ permit the devil to sow tares among the wheat? Why does Christ allow false preachers and false gospels to abound in these last days?—"but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

One, their going out manifests to his saints that Christ is using his gospel to do his winnowing work. We get discouraged when we see folks come and go. But we should not. It should remind us to continue preaching only Christ and him crucified because the fan is in Christ's hand and he is doing his winnowing work thoroughly purging his floor.

Two, it is to test his people and prove who are his

Deuteronomy 13: 3: Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of the prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

1 Corinthians 11: 19: For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

It hurts us to see brethren walk away to lies or to nothing at all. Especially when we have labored for them in prayer and sacrificed to have a quiet place where they can hear. It makes me want to say what Christ said, "*Have I been with you so long and you don't know me?*" But understand what John is declaring here: it is not a loss to Christ's church but a gain.

The body of Christ never loses living limbs!

## WHAT KEEPS GOD'S ELECT UNDER THE GOSPEL?

**1 John 2: 20: But ye have an unction [anointing] from the Holy One, and ye know all things.**

God's true sanctified child has been born of God and taught of God.

2 Corinthians 1:21: Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; 22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

When he sent the gospel to us, scripture says, "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" (1 Cor 1:30) *You know all things*—not just intellectually—but you have a new man created in you in which Christ has given you an understanding so that you really and truly know all things! You know all things because God has made Christ your Wisdom—we have the mind of Christ—a divine revelation. Therefore, we know Christ is our Righteousness—his blood has purged me of all my sins and I am complete in his righteousness. We know Christ is our Sanctification—it is not Christ plus my works that makes me holy. Christ alone sanctifies—"the water and the blood, from thy wounded side which flowed, be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure." We know Christ is our Redemption—if the Son shall set you free you shall be free indeed! You know all things because you know Christ is All!

By the anointing, Christ won't let us forget!

John 14: 26: But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

By the anointing, we know his voice from the voice of strangers when we hear the gospel preached!

John 10:4: And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5: And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

To those who can go away from Christ, who rebel against Christ, he says

John 10: 26: But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. 29: My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

Sheep only follow the voice of our Shepherd. We will not follow the voice of the stranger. There is a message the world loves to hear and there is a message Christ's sheep love to hear and we cannot stand the world's message and they can't stand ours.

1 John 4: 5: They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6: We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

While those who can, go out from us and walk no more with Christ, Christ says to us,

John 6: 67...Will ye also go away? 68 [we answer] Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69: And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mt 16: 16: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17: [he says to you] Blessed art thou,...for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

He is saying, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things." Those planted by the Lord never go out because we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed. That is the only reason we do not go away! That is how we persevere! In the face of every trial, every offense, all persecution, while others go out from us—no matter the case—

Romans 8: 38...I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is not true of a few, but this is true to all who God anoints with the oil of gladness.

Ephesians 4: 4: *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6: One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all...

Therefore, when Christ sends his gospel in truth, he brings each one he anoints into "*the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God*" (Eph 4:13).

Romans 12: 5: we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Therefore, this thing ceases to be about me personally. It is about these members of my own body, my brothers and sisters. I cannot sever one of my members from the body, nor can I sever myself from it for their sakes. "*Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*" (2 Tim 2: 10)

Christ suffered for these members to make us one! How dare I not suffer for them and with them? How dare I walk away? How dare I not do whatever it takes to *endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!*

## A WORD OF APPLICATION

**1 John 2: 24: Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. 25: And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life. 26: These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.**

Believer, give yourself to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ. Remember how Eve was deceived? She debated with the seducer, adding to and taking from the word of God. Then she parted from the word of God altogether. But how did it all start? She gave ear to the seducer.

2 Peter 3:17: Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18: But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

But know that it is the anointing of the Spirit that shall keep you—

**1 John 2: 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. 28: And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**

Jude 1:21: Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

This anointing forever preserves the child of God in union with Christ and our brethren. This anointing is God's infallible security against all the designs of antichrist.

**Amen!**