**They Were Not of Us**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 John 2:18-23**

**Wednesday Evening**

**September 6, 2023**

**1 John 2:18-23**

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also

**18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.**

Saints, the term last hour is used only here in the New Testament. It refers to the “last days” or the “end times”—the time between Christ’s first and second comings (see Joel 2:28; Micah 4:1).

**Joel 2:28-29**

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants

I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

**Micah 4:1**

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it”

Saints, the first-century readers of 1 Peter lived in the “last days,” and so do believers today. The word last also gives a sense of urgency. Christ will return soon.

The last days would be very perilous as well.

**2 Timothy 3:1-7**

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Saints, you have heard (referring to the teachings from the apostles) that the Antichrist is coming. (Paul wrote about this in:

**2 Thessalonians 2:3-12**

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Saints, John mentioned this not so that believers would try to identify the person, but so that they might be ready for anything that would threaten their faith.

Besides, as John went on, already such persons who could fit that description have come on the scene—already many such antichrists have appeared.

From the earliest days of the church in and around Ephesus, false teachers had been a problem.

When Paul bid his final farewell to the elders of the Ephesian church, he warned, “I know full well that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you.”

**Acts 20:29-30**

29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Saints, these are merely precursors to the one Antichrist. Throughout history there have been individuals who epitomized evil and who were hostile to everything for which Christ stands.

These antichrists have lived in every generation and will continue to work their evil. There are many cult leaders today who, through their teachings, draw people away from true faith.

Then just before Christ’s second coming, a completely evil man will arise. He will be Satan’s tool, equipped with Satan’s here in:

**2 Thessalonians 2:9**

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders”

Saints, this man will be the Antichrist. These other “antichrists” are the false teachers who deny that Jesus is the Christ,

That they deny that Jesus is God’s Son, and that Jesus was God incarnate in human form.

**2 John 7**

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist”

Saints, they are liars and deceivers. Jesus warned about them in:

**Matthew 24:24**

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect”

Saints, during this “last hour,” these antichrists—these false teachers who pretend to be Christians and who lure weak members away from Christ—will continue to be active, just as they were in John’s day.

Believers must be grounded in God’s word. They must teach the truth clearly and carefully to the peripheral, weak members among them in the church so that they won’t fall prey to these teachers.

**19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.**

Saints, these false teachers, these antichrists, were not total strangers to the churches;

they had been part of the church community, in fellowship with John and the other believers.

Then these people left the churches and evidently became promoters of false teachings about Jesus.

**2 John 7**

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist”

Saints, when their teachings were not accepted by the Christians or by those in leadership, they left. John explained that they never really belonged among the Christians in the first place.

When the false teachers left, they proved that they were never true believers. If they had been true believers, John stated, they would have stayed.

**John 3:1-8**

1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Saints, all who attend church may not be true believers. The true believers may not now be able to discern the false believers, but they may in time.

It may happen when some leave the churches and the teachings of Christ, proving that they never belonged.

Or it may not happen until the Day of Judgment when Christ will separate his true followers from those who never belonged.

**20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.**

Saints, John faced the false believers head-on by telling the true believers that the Holy Spirit has come upon them and they know the truth.

The Holy Spirit has been given to believers by the Father and the Son and promised by Jesus.

**John 14:16-17**

16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

**John 15:26**

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me”

Saints, when a person becomes a real Born Again Christian, he or she receives the Holy Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 1:21-23**

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom…

Saints, John compared the believers with the ones who had left the fellowship and thus proved that they never belonged there.

They did not receive Jesus Christ as Savior, so they did not receive the Holy Spirit. They did not know the truth, even though they may have claimed special wisdom and insight.

Christians can withstand false teachers’ attacks by relying on the Holy Spirit’s help.

**21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.**

Saints, those with the Holy Spirit not only know the truth about the Father and the Son but can also detect the difference between truth and falsehood.

John wrote, not giving them further teaching; the false teachers were attempting to do that. Instead, he was reaffirming the truth that had already been taught to them and that they had believed.

**22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.**

Saints, the great truth is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who came in the flesh to die for sin.

**Romans 3:2-4**

3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? 4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged."

Saints, to deny this amounts to blatant heresy—John battled this as the central focus of the false teaching.

A man named Cerinthus, an avowed enemy of the apostle John, said that Jesus is not the Christ.

He spoke of “Jesus” and “the Christ” as two separate beings who were united only from the time of Jesus’ baptism to the time of his crucifixion.

Cerinthus taught that “the Christ” left Jesus at the Crucifixion. In other words, Jesus was no more than a mere man who, for a time, had been given divine power.

Anyone who would teach this heresy, said John, is the great liar. Such people are antichrists, for they have denied the Father and the Son. They are believing a lie, and lies are from Satan their Father!

**John 8:42-44**

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

**23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also**

Saints, apparently, the antichrists in John’s day were claiming faith in God while denying and opposing the Son.

To do so, John firmly stated, is impossible. Because Jesus is God’s Son and the Messiah, anyone who denies the Son doesn’t have the Father either.

Many cultists today call themselves Christians, but they deny the deity of Jesus Christ. Some churches, such as the Unitarian church, deny the unique status of Christ as the Son of God.

John reiterated that no one can claim to have special knowledge of God while denying Jesus Christ’s deity and humanity.

In both his Gospel and his letters, John made it very clear that the Father can be known only through the Son.

**John 3:11**

“Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness”

**John 5:37**

“And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form”

**John 6:46**

“Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father”

**John 8:16**

“And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me”

**John 8:38**

“I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

Saints, three times Jesus announced that he and the Father were. Denying Jesus means denying God, then the converse is also true: anyone who confesses the Son has the Father also.

The disciples, however, found it difficult to conceptualize the Father about whom Jesus so often talked. During his last discourse with his disciples, Jesus again spoke of the Father.

Exasperated, Philip blurted out,

**John 14:8**

“Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied”

**John 14:8**

Jesus told Philip, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!”

The Son was and has always been the image of the invisible God.

**2 Corinthians 4:4**

“whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them”

**Colossians 1:15**

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation”

**Hebrews1:3**

“who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**