

7 Ways To Determine If You Are A Believer

Part One

Dec 11, 2016

I. Background

A. Comparison of Chapters one and two

There is a parallel between chapters one (If we say ...) and two (The one who says ...)

1Jn 1:6-7 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ...

1Jn 2:4-5 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ...

1Jn 1:8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ...

1 Jn 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

1Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

1 Jn 2:8-11 ... The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now ...

John is presenting his message in contrast to the false teachings of the Gnostics.

B. 1Jn 1:8 - 2:25 - has seven tests that shows who are the real Christian.

1. **Repentance Test:** Willingness to confess sin (1:8 -2:2)

2. **Moral Test:** Obedience (2:3-6)

3. **Social Test:** Loving fellow Christians (2:7-11)

4. **Victory Test:** Victory over the evil one (2:12-14)

5. **World Test:** Forsaking the world (2:15-17)

6. **Perseverance Test:** Fellowship, connectedness within a church (2:18-19)

7. **Doctrinal Test:** What we believe (2:20-27)

II. The tests

1. Repentance Test: (1:8 -2:2)

"If we confess our sins" ... (initially and continually).

2. Moral Test: (2:3-6)

1Jn 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

"By this we know we have come to know Him" (2:3)

we keep His commandments.

we keep His word,

we walk in the same manner as He walked.

"know"

The word "know" is used in its Hebrew sense of personal relationship (Gen 4:1; Jer 1:5).

The Greek sense was to know facts about something or someone.

The gospel is both a person and a body of truth.

Emphasizing:

1. We can know God;
2. We can know what He wants for our lives;
3. We can know that we know! (1Jn 5:13).

John is writing to encourage believers as well as refute heresy.

The Gospel of John and I John use the terms for “know” more than any other of the books in the NT. I John is a book of assurance based on knowledge of the gospel and commensurate lifestyle love and obedience.

Summary of 1Jn 2:3-6:

John tells his readers that they can be sure they know God as they seek to follow Jesus through obedience.

This doesn't mean living to a rigid code of laws, but joyfully responding to God's will.

John isn't talking about being perfect - he has already said that we aren't.

He is describing the basic direction and desire of our lives - to please God and go his way.

This is what Jesus did perfectly, and we have his example to follow.

Ask the indwelling Holy Spirit to make you more like Jesus Christ, and saturate yourself with His life as you read the Scriptures.

3. Social Test: (2:7-11)

1Jn 2:7-11 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. 8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. 9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Not a new, but an old commandment - love one another (Jn 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; 1Jn 3:10-18)

2:9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother
is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, the darkness has blinded his eyes.

2:10 The one who loves his brother
abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

Summary:

John is not inventing a new commandment when he says, 'Walk as Jesus did.' He is reminding his readers of what they already know. They are to love one another.

The Father gave this commandment to Israel, 'Love your neighbor as yourself' (Lev 19:18); and Jesus, the Son of God, gave this commandment to his disciples, 'Love each other as I have loved you' (Jn 15:12); now the Holy Spirit enables us to love another (Rom 5:5; 13:8-10).

But this is a new commandment because Jesus has now shown the kind of love involved.
He has washed his disciples' feet - acting as their slave even though he is their Lord (Jn 13:12-15).

And he has given his life on the cross - making the supreme sacrifice for everyone in the world.

Christians have a new understanding of the command to love - and a new fellowship in which to live it out.

The church is the place where God's people live in his light.

Whoever hates a fellow Christian is still in the dark.

No doubt John is referring to those members who have recently left the fellowship.

Through love, we can overcome the powers of darkness.

4. Victory Test: (2:12-14)

1Jn 2:12-14 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Summary: Focus on the family

Because of Jesus Christ, you have a family. The members are at different stages of spiritual development, but all can receive the Word and grow. How wonderful it is when the "little children" become young men and then fathers!

We can overcome Satan through remembering our salvation and past spiritual victories and by abiding in God's Word.

5. World Test: (2:15-17)

1Jn 2:15-17 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

"Don't love ... Do love ..."

We can overcome the world ("the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions,") with God's love.

John urges his readers not to love the world.

This sounds strange, when we know that God loves the world so much that he sent Jesus to be its Savior (Jn 3:16). But there is a difference between loving the world for its values and ways and loving the world because you want to change it.

We are not to love the evil things of this world, which will soon pass away.

Love of the world is an enemy. The Bible often gives the choice between loving the world and loving God.

Joshua challenged the Israelites to choose between their old pagan gods and the Lord God (Jos 24:15).

Jesus gave his disciples a stark choice. He told them it is impossible to 'serve both God and money' (Mt 6:24).

Christians who love the world lose:

Their enjoyment of the Father's love and the desire to do His will.

We are to love God, who gives us eternal life.

The world

When John talks of 'the world' he means human life without God.

If we don't know the love and purpose of God, we devote all our time and energy to getting what we want. We are consumed by the things we strive for, lust after and boast about.

But the world's possessions can't last and its achievements are short-lived.

The person who lives for God has the lasting treasure of salvation, and the promise of eternal life.

6. Perseverance Test: (2:18-19)

1Jn 2:18-19 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

A. "the last hour"

1. This phrase and similar phrases like "the last days" refer to the period of time from Jesus' birth in Bethlehem to the Second Coming. The kingdom has come, but is not yet fully consummated.
2. This is a time of choice and decision between:
God and the world; Christ and Satan; light and darkness.
3. It is a time when the 'antichrist' will appear (see below).
4. The people of the OT believed in two ages, the current evil age and the age of righteousness ushered in by the Spirit, which was still future. What the OT did not clearly reveal was the two comings of the Messiah, the first as Savior and the second as Consummator. These two ages overlap.
5. Time ("hour" = kairos) there are two Greek words for time; how John uses them:

chronos = time as "a clock"

Jn 5:6 he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him...

Jn 7:33 Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.

Jn 12:35 So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you ...

Jn 14:9 "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip?

Rev 2:21 'I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality

Rev 6:11 and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer,

Rev 10:6 ... that there will be delay no longer,

Rev 20:3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; ...

kairos = now time, "like a woman in labor"

Jn 5:4 for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool ...

Jn 7:6-8 So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.

7 "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. 8 "Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."

Rev 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Rev 11:18 "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name,

Rev 12:12 ... Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

Rev 12:14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

Rev 22:10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

B. "the antichrist"

1. **Only John** uses this term "antichrist" (1Jn 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2Jn 7).

2. **Notice** in 2:18 it is both plural and singular.

1Jn 2:18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

2Jn 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

3. There are references to the same end-time person in other biblical writers:

Daniel (Dan 7:7-8, 23-26; 9:24-27);
Jesus (Mk 13:14-23; Mt 24:15-28);
John (Rev 13);
Paul (2Thes 2).

4. John makes a distinction between the antichrist person and the spirit of antichrist.

This spirit of antichrist is always present in the world.

1Jn 2:18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

1Jn 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

2Jn 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

Mt 24:24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. (Mk 13:6, 22; Mt 24:5)

5. Historical examples of antichrists:

- a) Antiochus IV Epiphanes (little horn of Dan 8; 11:36-45)
- b) Nero and Domitian (claimed deity but not Messiahship)
- c) Atheistic Communism
- d) Secular Humanism

6. John says that 'many antichrists' have appeared already.

He means the false teachers who have been undermining the church. They have tampered with the truth about Jesus and made extra rules about Christian behavior. Worst of all, they have split the church.

- a) The false teachers are those who may not be against Christ (Mk 13:6, 22; Mt 24:5, 24)
- b) The false messiahs, they claim to be the Christ.
- c) Modern cult leaders
- c) The Antichrist (Dan 7:8; 9:23-26, 24-27; 2Thes 2:3; Rev. 13)

7. John warned about the coming "antichrist" and the many "antichrists" who would precede him (1Jn 2:18; 4:1-6).

These antichrists are apostate religious teachers who deny Christ (1Jn 2:22-23), thus proving that they never knew him (1Jn 2:19).

8. The antichrist

He is a world leader who opposes the good purpose of God and tries to seduce the followers of Christ.

Summary:

Christians in every age will experience both false teachers (who deny Christ) and false Messiahs (who claim to be Christ). However, one day, the last day, one special incarnation of evil will do both!

C. They went out from us, (2:19)

Some people have left the church - they were not really of us

If they had been of us:

- they would have remained with us;
- they went out (because) they are not of us.

Their departure is proof that they weren't united in the truth and love of Christ. Jesus warned his disciples that there would be such lies and betrayals in the last days (Mk 13:5, 12).

Their claims:

- a) that they know more about God than everyone else,
- b) that they are already living as his perfect children.

The following references were used in this study

I John Study Guide (by R. J. Utley)
With the Word Bible Commentary (by Wiersby)
Wilmington's Bible handbook
Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words
The Bible Guide, by A. Knowles