

7 Ways To Determine If You Are A Believer

Part Two

Dec 18, 2016

I. Review:

A. 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. **Growth 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)

B. We have covered the first three tests

1. **Repentance Test:** Willingness to confess sin (1:8 -2:2)
"If we confess our sins" ... (initially and continually).

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

We can be sure we (and others) know God as we seek to follow Jesus through obedience.

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

We keep His commandments (love, Rom 8:8-10)

We keep His word (Mt 7:21-27)

We walk in the same manner as He walked (1Jn 2:6; Jn 15:5-8)

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

We live and walk in the light through loving God's people. There is to be no room in our heart for hate or indifference.

The church is the place where God's people live in His light and walk in His love (1Jn 2:10).

Whoever hates a fellow Christian is still in the dark (1Jn 2:9, 11).

Whoever causes others to stumble is also in the dark (1Jn 2:10).

Through love, we can overcome the powers of darkness (Gal 5:13-15).

II. The next four tests:

4. Growth 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.

Believers are to make progress in our lives:

Heb 6:1 ... Let us press on to maturity, ...

(1Pt 2:2; 2Pt 1:5-8; 3:18; Phil 2:12; 3:12-14; 1Cor 9:24-27)

Progress in the Christian life

1Tim 4:15 ... so that your progress will be evident to all.

Rom 8:29 ... He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, ...

2Cor 3:18 we all ... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, ...
Eph 4:15 ... we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

Progress in the Old Testament

Ps 84:7 They go from strength to strength, ..

Ps 92:12 The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar

Pr 4:18 the path of the righteous ... shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

Seeds and plants

Lk 8:14-15 "The seed which fell among the ... in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. (Mt 13:22-23; Mk 4:19-20; 2Co 9:10)

Believers are to grow spiritually:

Definition of spiritual growth = the process of spiritual development and maturing

Eph 4:13-15 ... we are no longer to be children, ... we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, (1Cor 3:1-2; 13:11; 14:20; Heb 5:12-14; 1Pt 2:2)

The apostles worked and prayed for growth in believers

Col 1:28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. (2Cor 13:9; Col 4:12)

God desires the spiritual growth of his people

Heb 6:1 ... let us press on to maturity, ... (Mt 5:48; 2Cor 13:9-11; Eph 1:4; 2:10; 3:17-19; Phil 3:12; 1Thes 4:1,7; 2Tim 1:9)

Christ-likeness is the goal of spiritual growth

Rom 8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; (Eph 4:13-15; Phil 2:5; 1Jn 3:2-3)

Aspects of spiritual growth

Growth in grace

2Pe 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Growth in faith

2Cor 10:15 not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, (2Th 1:3)

Growth in love

1Th 3:12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; (1Cor 14:1; Phil 1:9; 1Th 4:9-10; Heb 10:24; 2Pt 1:7-8; 1Jn 4:7-21; 5:1-3)

Growth in understanding and knowledge

Col 1:9 ...to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, (Col 1:10; 1Cor 13:11; 14:20; Rom 12:2; 16:19; Eph 1:17-19; 3:16-19; Phil 1:9-10; Heb 5:14; 2Pt 1:3,6; 3:18)

Growth in holiness

2Cor 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (Eph 5:25-26; Heb 2:11; 10:10-14; 1Pt 1:15-16)

Growth in fruitfulness

Jn 15:1-16 I chose and appointed you to bear fruit

15:1 bear fruit
15:2 bear more fruit
15:5 bear much fruit
15:16 bear fruit that remains
(Mt 13:23; Mk 4:20; Lk 8:15; Phil 1:11; Col 1:10)

Growth in contentment

Heb 13:5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," (Phil 4:11-12; 1Ti 6:6)

Summary: Focus on growth.

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 (over the 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 idols and the Lord (Jos 24:15).

Jesus challenged His disciples -. you can't 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.

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
Dictionary of Bible Themes