



Christianity Is Not a Religion

August 14, 2015

Text: 1 John 2:18-29

1 John 2:18 NIV---Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

- The LAST HOUR means a short time and Jesus is coming back.
- Jesus told His disciples that if He went Home He would come back and get them.
- They thought He was coming back in their lifetime.
- I used to think He was coming back in my lifetime, but the older I get, that view is changing.
- One of Paul's earliest letters was to the Thessalonians.
- In 1 Thess. the theme of the letter is JESUS IS COMING SOON, so they sat down and waited on Him.
- He wrote 2 Thess. and told them He was not coming back THAT SOON.
- The theme of 2 Thess. is WORKING WHILE YOU WAIT.
- In 2 Thess. Paul discusses THE antichrist.

2 Thessalonian 2:1-4--- Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

- John is saying here that many who have the same attitude as THE antichrist have come denying the Truth and trying to deceive both believers and non-believers.

1 John 2:19---They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

- When you are born again, you become a new creation... old things passed away.
- You don't go back to old things once you are truly a child of God.

Matthew 10:22--- All men will hate you because of Me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

- Your hanging in there till the end does not save you, but if you are saved, you will be hanging on till the end.

1 John 2:20-21--- But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. ²¹ I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. ²² Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist — he denies the Father and the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

- Anointing. If Jesus is on the stool of your heart, you have the anointing because Jesus IS the Anointed One.
- If Jesus is on the stool of your heart, you KNOW the TRUTH (Jesus).
- There is no LIE in Jesus because He is TRUTH.
- Who is the LIAR?
- He who denies that Jesus is the Christ... the Messiah... the Savior... the Anointed One.
- Whoever denies that is the antichrist denying both the Father and the Son because the Father and Son are ONE.
- If you acknowledge the Son, you acknowledge the Father because they are ONE.

How Is Christianity Different From Religion?

- First, unlike other religions, Christianity is rooted in history and evidence.
- Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem in Judea during the reign of Caesar Augustus and was put to death by Pontius Pilate, a first-century Roman governor.
- The testimony of his life, death, and resurrection is validated both by credible eyewitness testimony and by credible extra-biblical evidence as well.
- No other religion can legitimately claim this kind of support from history and evidence.

- Furthermore, of all the influential religious leaders of the world (Buddha, Moses, Zoroaster, Krishna, Lao Tzu, Muhammad, Baha'u'llah), only Jesus claimed to be God in human flesh (Mark 14:62).
- And this was not an empty boast.
- For through the historically verifiable fact of the resurrection, Christ vindicated his claim to deity (Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3–8).
- Other religions, such as Buddhism and Islam, claim miracles in support of their faith; however, unlike Christianity, such miracles lack historical validation.

- Thirdly, Christianity is unique in that it is a coherent belief structure.
- Some Christian doctrines may transcend comprehension; however, unlike the claims of other religions, they are never irrational or contradictory.
- Christianity is also unique in that it cogently accounts for the vast array of phenomena we encounter in everyday life: the human mind, laws of science, laws of logic, ethical norms, justice, love, meaning in life, the problem of evil and suffering, and truth.
- In other words, Christianity corresponds with the reality of our present condition.

- The most distinguishing characteristic that delineates Christianity from religions is this:
- Religion demands that YOU do something to attain their end goal... Heaven, nirvana, paradise, perfection, utopia, whatever.
- In Christianity, Jesus does everything FOR you.
- He substitutes for us... takes our places... accomplishes FOR us what we cannot possibly do ourselves.

The Gospel According to Melchizedek

- Two coalitions of Kings fought.
- Sodom's King lost and all the people and resources of Sodom were confiscated including Lot and his family.
- Abraham took the men of his household and defeated those kings and took back all they stole from Sodom including Lot.

- Then Abraham met Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:1-3 & 9-10--- This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him,² and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace."³ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever....⁹ One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham,¹⁰ because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

- Levi was Abraham's great grandson... not even a twinkle in his great grandfather's eye.
- The Bible says that Levi also paid a tithe to Melchizedek because when Abraham paid it, Levi was in the body, or the bloodline of Abraham.
- Abraham paid. Levi got credit as if he paid himself even though he didn't.

Ephesians 1:4--- For He chose us in Him (Jesus) before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.

- You and I were placed into the BODY, the BLOODLINE of Jesus before the foundation of the world.
- Just like Levi was in Abraham, we were IN CHRIST.

Matthew 5:48--- Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- God's Law demanded perfection.

James 2:10--- For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

- There is only ONE person whoever fulfilled the perfection requirement of the whole Law... Jesus.

Hebrews 4:15--- For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

- When Jesus live a perfect life, where were we?
- IN HIM.
- Therefore, we get credit for living a perfect life just as Levi got credit for paying tithes.

Romans 6:23--- For the wages of sin is death.

- Sin, acting independently apart from God, separates us from Him, the Source of Life.
- Sin results in death.
- Someone has to die in order to pay for our sin.
- When Jesus became sin for us and died on the cross for our sins, where were we?
- IN CHRIST.
- Jesus died to pay for our sins and we got credit for it just as if we died ourselves although we didn't die.
- When Jesus rose from the dead in order to give us His resurrected life to live, where were we?

Ephesians 2:6--- And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

- God raised us up with Christ and seated us in Heaven with Him.
- Where are we now?
- It's going to shock us when we get to Heaven and discover that we have been there all along.

- How much of all this did YOU have anything to do with?
 - Did YOU live a perfect life?
 - Did YOU die on the cross?
 - Did YOU rise from the dead?
 - Did YOU ascend to Heaven?

- NO! Jesus did ALL this FOR you.
- All you had to do was believe Him... trust Him... receive Him... rely upon Him... put your whole weight upon Him... and all He did FOR you becomes yours.

John 1:12--- Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God.

- BELIEVE is an ACTION word.
- All YOU have to do is RECEIVE the gift, and BELIEVE (cling to, trust in, rely upon, put your whole weight upon).
- Have you done that?
- Don't take it for granted.
- We are not talking about mental assent.
- Does Jesus love you unconditionally? Are you living as if you are?
- Did Jesus forgive you all your sins? Are you living as if you are totally forgiven?
- If not, why not?
- Maybe it's time we got serious about walking in Him.

1 John 2:24-25--- See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what He promised us — even eternal life.

- HEAR in Hebrew and Aramaic means “to obey.”
- If you hear it, you understand it, and you do what you heard.
- Remember: Faith is an ACTION word.
- When God reveals truth to you, what you do next reveals whether you believe it or not.
- EX: “Clay, take out the trash.”

- If you hear and obey, then you will abide or remain in Christ and in the Father because both are ONE.
- And abiding in Christ is ETERNAL LIFE because He is ETERNAL LIFE.

1 John 2:26-27--- I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in Him.

- Verse 27 should not be taken to mean that Christians have no need for pastors and teachers, otherwise Ephesians 4:11-13 would not be in the NT.

Ephesians 4:11-13--- It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- Rather, he is saying that believers must be Spirit-taught personally through the Word and should not always depend on human teachers.
- The Christian in fellowship with God will read and understand the Bible and be taught by the Spirit.

John 16:13--- But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.

1 John 2:28-29--- And now, dear children, continue in Him, so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of Him.

The Main Lesson Is Clear

- If we Christians desire to have fellowship with Christ, we must obey the Word, love God's people, and believe the truth.
- Whenever sin enters, the Christian must immediately confess it and claim God's forgiveness.
- We must spend time in the Word, learning the truth and letting the truth take hold of the inner person.
- Or, to look at it negatively, the Christian who deliberately disobeys the Word, neglects the Word, and who cannot get along with God's people is out of fellowship with God and in the dark.
- It is not enough to talk about the Christian life; we must practice it.
- And remember: Practice means getting out of Jesus' way and letting Him live full and free in us, thru us, for us, and as us.
- In this sense, PRACTICE will make you PERFECT because He is PERFECT.

