

# Jesus is Coming Back Soon

1 John 2:18–27

## I. INTRO

- A. Jesus is coming back soon // 'I can feel it in my bones // The day is coming close // Tell the world that they gotta know // Jesus is coming back soon
  - 1. Those are the lyrics of a recent song by Forrest Frank and Josiah Queen.
- B. Whether you're excited by that idea or unsettled by it, one thing is certain: people are talking about the return of Christ.
- C. Just this week two people asked me the same question: "Do you think Jesus is coming back soon?"
- D. My answer is always the same: "I don't know. But I do know we're closer today than we've ever been before. And I personally think it will happen soon!"
- E. For some of you, that gets you excited!
- F. For others it creates anxiety.
  - 1. You immediately start thinking about the antichrist, tribulation, the end of the world, and if you should install a bunker in your backyard
  - 2. Or maybe you start worrying about if you're ready for Jesus to return
- G. And that is exactly where John takes us today...
  - 1. The AntiChrist. Welcome to Revolve. Happy Father's Day.
  - 2. Actually, John doesn't want his readers to be worried
  - 3. He wants them to feel confident and secure, unafraid
  - 4. He wants them to be able to recognize LIES b/c they are so deeply rooted in the TRUTH (ex: counterfeit money)
- H. The Christians John is writing to were surrounded by deception.
  - 1. False teachers had left their community and were trying to pull believers away from the gospel
- I. We live in a world full of deception as well
  - 1. The idea that there is TRUTH is offensive to many (your truth, my truth)
  - 2. People will pride themselves on embracing a spiritual buffet
  - 3. Buffets are nice for food, but will you wager your eternal destination on it?
- J. And John's antidote is surprisingly simple: "Jesus is coming back soon. So, stay close to Jesus!"

## II. *[18] Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.*

- A. A conservative date for 1 John is around 90AD, give or take 5 years
- B. So for nearly 2000 years the church has been anticipating the return of Christ
- C. For John to say it is the last hour doesn't mean that it is the final 60 minutes, but that all that's left, essentially, is the end.
  - 1. God created the world. Man rebelled against him and sin entered the world. God made a promise to solve the sin chasm. Jesus came, lived a perfect life, but died a criminal's death so we could be forgiven. The

sacrifice is complete. The resurrection and ascension already happened, and the HS was given. Now we are waiting for his return!

2. If John said, "It is the last hour" 2000 years ago, how much more true is that statement today? Jesus really is coming back soon!
- D. John's first argument is this: Jesus is coming back soon and that reality is evidenced by the fact that you look into the world and can see Satan to undermine Jesus' agenda!
- E. John says that many antichrists have come, and we will unpack that a bit in this section, but here's what you need to know up front
  1. The most dangerous false teachers are not those who reject Jesus altogether; but those who redefine Jesus.
  2. Antichrists are those who are opposed to Christ, undermining his goals
- F. John mentions that believers had heard that 'the Antichrist' is coming, but his focus here is not on a future world ruler, but all the little opponents, "the false teachers": who oppose Christ and distort the gospel
- G. John's argument is that the appearance of opponents to the gospel shows the last hour is here – the enemy knows his time is brief.**

III. *[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 it might become plain that they all are not of us.*

- A. John sheds some light on the antichrists - those opposed to Christ
  1. They started in the church, but they were never one of "the church"
- B. John isn't talking about strangers. These were people they knew. People they worshiped with. People they trusted
  1. Try to remember how small the church was in 90 AD!
- C. He says that these antichrists belonged to the congregation, but they never truly belonged to Christ.
- D. Note: he doesn't say that they lost their salvation. He says they "were not of us"
  1. Jesus said, "Depart from me, I NEVER knew you."
- E. In other words, the antichrists, those who the enemy sends to undermine Jesus (as if that were possible), often look and smell like believing Christians
  1. But they are wolves in sheep's clothing...
- F. To summarize so far
  1. Jesus is coming back soon
  2. The activity of Satan via antichrists shows we are in the final push
  3. Antichrists left the Christian community of "apostolic truth" (explain).
  4. If they had truly belonged to the truth, they would have remained.
  5. Their departure (from the church and truth) exposed their heart

IV. *[20] But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. [21] I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.*

- A. Now you might dip into fear and say, "What if Bill is an antichrist? What if Revolve is deceiving me? What if I get tricked?"
- B. John wants to reinforce a truth for you

1. Remember that 1 John is written to unpack “signs of true spiritual life”
2. Jesus said, as recorded in John’s Gospel, that “My sheep hear my voice...there are other voices, but MY sheep hear MY voice.”
- C. John builds on that essentially saying: a sign of life is that you know what is true
  1. 2 Cor 5:17 → New Creation... In Christ... If you are in Christ... You’ve been anointed by the Holy One → indwelt by the Holy Spirit
  2. The Holy Spirit reminds us of truth, illuminates truth, convicts us of sin, leads us into truth → HIS WORD IS TRUTH
- D. This is John’s way of saying that true believers have the Holy Spirit protecting them and guarding them from lies as they abide in God’s truth
  1. Not to say you can never believe false doctrines, but that the antichrist won’t trick you into believing something satanic whereby you lose yourself
    - a) “You’re not going to accidentally get the Mark of the Beast”
  2. The enemy is not stronger than Christ
  3. The Spirit preserves God’s people in the truth
- E. Again, to summarize John’s thought process → don’t panic
  1. You believed the truth about Jesus
  2. You have been anointed by the Holy One (the Holy Spirit’s work).
  3. The Holy Spirit will remind you of the truth as you stay close to him
  4. John is not writing because they are ignorant, but because they already know the truth and can recognize lies.
- F. And that is how we recognize an antichrist → lies
- V. [22] Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. [23] No one who denies the Son has the Father.
- A. Who is an antichrist? John is super clear.
  1. Someone who teaches that Jesus is NOT the only Messiah, the Savior
  2. Someone who teaches that Jesus is NOT the Son of God
- B. An antichrist is more than someone who rejects Jesus. An antichrist is someone who replaces the real Jesus with a false one (not deity; not savior).
- C. Friends...
  1. Buddhism claims Jesus as a wise teacher, not the divine Son of God who saves sinners
  2. Islam honors Jesus as a prophet but explicitly denies that he is the Son of God and denies that his death secures salvation.
  3. Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that Jesus is a created being rather than the eternal Son of God.
  4. Mormonism uses Christian language but rejects the historic Christian teaching that Jesus is the eternal Son, fully and uniquely God.
  5. New Age spirituality and Hinduism treat Jesus as an enlightened guide rather than the unique incarnate Son of God and Savior.
  6. Even some brands of liberal christianity deny that faith in Jesus is necessary for salvation, teaching that all people will ultimately be saved.
- D. The most dangerous false teachers are not those who reject Jesus entirely – like an atheist – claiming he didn’t exist.

- E. The most dangerous are those who redefine Jesus to fit their mold and purposes!
- VI. *[23b] Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.*
  - A. Conversely, the one who confesses the Son has the Father
  - B. Just b/c someone disagrees with your theology or church practice doesn't mean they are from the devil
  - C. John's benchmark on primary doctrines here relate to the deity of Christ and the reality of him being the savior of the world
    - 1. That means "Jesus is fully God; God the Son"
    - 2. And "Salvation = Jesus + Nothing"
      - a) Not Jesus plus rituals, Jesus plus good works, Jesus plus secret knowledge, Jesus plus your performance → Just faith in Jesus
  - D. Maybe some believe in XYZ secondary or tertiary doctrine. THAT's not the standard
  - E. Let's not tear each other apart! Focus on the majors.
- VII. *[24] Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. [25] And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.*
  - A. So what do we do? Hold fast to truth! ABIDE! Remain. Stay. Dwell. MARINATE.
  - B. Let what you have heard (the gospel truth) remain (ABIDE) in you. Cling to it
  - C. I love how Hebrews 2:1 explains: "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."
    - 1. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus & keep your hand on the rudder so you KNOW you're going in the right direction
    - 2. But when we start to compromise that focus
    - 3. When we start to fix our gaze on other things (cf. world and all that is in the world; half-truths; lies, etc), we DRIFT
  - D. Remaining in the Son and Father leads to God's promised blessing (v.25).
  - E. What is the promise? The promise is eternal life.
- VIII. *[26] I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. [27] But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.*
  - A. John is warning them because deceivers are trying to lead them astray (v.26).
    - 1. The threat is real.
    - 2. False teachers are actively attempting to deceive believers.
  - B. But John wants to remind them (and you) they have the Spirit's anointing, which equips them to recognize the truth
    - 1. The anointing remains in them.
    - 2. Therefore they are not dependent on the deceivers for truth.
    - 3. The Spirit teaches what is true and exposes lies.
  - C. John is not saying Christians don't need pastors, teachers, or instruction.
    - 1. He is saying they do not need the secret knowledge offered by the false teachers because they already possess the truth through the apostolic gospel and the Holy Spirit.

2. You don't need to go to YouTube for weird teachings from people who "finally figured it out" → you already KNOW THE TRUTH!
- D. Church, maybe Jesus comes back in our lifetime.
  1. Maybe He comes back before we finish another sermon in 1 John.
  2. Maybe He comes back long after we're gone.
  3. I don't know. But I do know this: Every day that passes is one day closer to His appearing.
- E. False teachers are real. Antichrists are real. The threat is real.
- F. **But John's answer to deception is not obsession with the antichrist, but abiding in Jesus**

*IX. [28] And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. (ESV)*

- A. Jesus is coming back. That's not supposed to terrify us. That's our hope.
  1. The One who saved us is the One who is returning for us
  2. The One who shed His blood for us is the One who is coming to get us
- B. And until that day, don't chase secret knowledge, novel teachings, or every new voice that claims to have finally figured out what Christians have supposedly missed for two thousand years.
- C. Hold fast to the old gospel. Hold fast to Christ. Remain in Christ. Abide in Christ. Stay near Christ.
- D. Because when Christ appears, John says there are only two possibilities: Confidence or shrinking back. If you marinate in TRUTH by FAITH, you will have confidence.
  1. Not because you are the perfect believer who never messes up
  2. Not because you earned your place by passing the test
  3. Not because of anything you did
  4. But because those who have truly trusted Christ have remained in Christ.
- E. The safest place in a world full of lies is exactly where John tells us to be: Remaining close to Jesus
- F. Maybe you're here today and you've realized that you've known about Jesus without truly trusting Jesus.
  1. John's concern isn't whether you've attended church.
  2. His concern is whether you have the Son. Do you know Christ?
  3. Have you entrusted yourself to Him? The same Savior who is coming as King is today offering mercy to all who will come to Him by faith.
  4. If he came back right now would you have confidence (that's the goal of 1 John), or would you shrink back b/c you've been hiding behind a paper shield called religion?
  5. The return of Christ is wonderful news for those who belong to Him, but it is a sobering reality for those who do not.
  6. The question is not whether Jesus will return. The question is whether you are ready to meet Him.
- G. Scan QR Code for some basics on how to ABIDE → How to marinate in truth so you can look, smell, and taste more like Jesus day to day