

# First John (9) - The Antichrist Versus The Anointed

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Date: 08 December 2019

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] chapter 2. Tonight we're looking at verses 18 to 27. As we continue through the first letter of John, we'll come to this section beginning verse 18, and we'll look at it down to verse 27.

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. The question to consider is, if God were going to write a letter to ourselves as a congregation, the way that he wrote through the Apostle John to the people that John wrote to here, what do you think he would include in the letter?

It is quite a thought, isn't it, that if God were going to write specially to us as a congregation of the church, as a church, what would God need to include in that? Where would he need to encourage us? What would he need to rebuke us about? And although that's something that we cannot necessarily be sure about, we are sure that he's writing to us here and speaking to us through this letter as part of Scripture, just as surely as he spoke through John to these people that John wrote to. And you recall from our previous study up to this point that we saw John's structure of the letter really is around three assessments, if you like, of where they are, and giving some teaching in association with that, three assessments or three tests, by which they will assess not only themselves as Christians, but the false teachers that they need to face, and the teaching of the false teachers that they need to repudiate, and that they need to stand against and overcome. And we saw the first two assessments were to do with ethical matters, where our obedience is centrally important, the commandments that he mentions, where the ethical requirements, the moral requirements of the

Christian life are set out, and where that, in John's letter here, is accompanied by an emphasis on obedience. The second test, or the second assessment, was to do with what you might call a social assessment. It's to do with relationships. It's to do with how we are in relation to each other, as well as to God. And what sits in that, in terms of what we should be, is that we must love one another.

That's where John, in setting out the social test, contrasts those who are false teachers, who don't have that characteristic, who don't have the mark of love, as God's people are meant to. Well, here he is, in that test, saying the emphasis has to be on love, and in relation to that, do not love the world, or the things of the world, in the previous passage. And tonight, we're coming to the third of the tests, and they're going to be repeated, really, or reiterated, anyway, through the epistle, as we'll see, God willing. This one is doctrinal. This one has to do with what we believe. This one has to do with the truth as it's set out by God, and how we relate to that truth of God. Because this really is what this passage is containing, the truth of God in Christ, the truth about Jesus, especially. And you can see very clearly that he's now coming to define those false teachers more clearly for us, us. Previously, there were kind of shadowy figures, if you like. You could detect that he was writing about them, or writing against them, from what he was saying, and possibly even borrowing some of the statements, or some of the definitions that the false teachers themselves made. But they've now come out of the shadows, and he's really referring to them very distinctly as the Antichrists. And he's saying, you know that it is the last hour, because many Antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour. And that's why he focuses here on our belief about a belief in relation to God, and relation to Jesus especially.

[ 4 : 14 ] And we'll see that the person of Jesus is very central to what he's saying, encountering the belief of the Antichrist, the false teachers. Let's look at two things in relation to that as we go through the passage, and not looking at every detail, but looking at it in its main teaching.

First of all, he talks about the arrival of the Antichrists. And then secondly, he speaks about the answer to the Antichrist, or you might say the antidote, the counter to the Antichrists, where he actually there speaks about two protective elements that God has given to us, to counter the Antichrist, but also to protect ourselves against the Antichrist, and against false teaching. And we see that includes the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, the Word that abides in us, that we are to let abide in us, and also the anointing that he speaks about here, which is a direct counter to the accusations, or the teachings, or the insinuations, the temptations set out by the false teachers. So the arrival of the Antichrist, first of all, let's go through that briefly.

There it is beginning at verse 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. Now this last hour, he mentions us elsewhere in the Bible, you know that in the New Testament it speaks about the last times, or the last days. And the last days, from the coming of Christ, extend through to his return.

This is the final slice of history, the final part of God's program for his church in this world. These last days began with the coming of Christ, followed through to his death and resurrection and exaltation, and go through and to right through to the end of that part, the end of the age, as it's put elsewhere, at the return of Christ. But the last hour is the final part of the last days. The last hour really takes us towards the very end of this time before Christ returns. And as you look at it there, we're not to think of that in terms of time, in terms of months or years or even centuries.

That's where a lot of people, a lot of groups especially, that really are so concerned to embroil themselves in these speculations as to when the last day will be, when Christ will come.

[ 6 : 59 ] They're looking at these issues chronologically, rather than theologically. What John is telling us is that we mustn't think of defining the last hour chronologically. We mustn't think of how many years are to go before Christ returns. What he's saying is the last hour is defined, not chronologically, but theologically. You define it by what it contains. You define it by its characteristics. And one of the main characteristics of it is, it is the age of the Antichrists.

They have come, just as predicted, so they have come. As you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many Antichrists have come. This is already the case. This is what defines the last hour.

Even if it continues for another few hundred or even thousands of years. That's not the point. John is saying this is what characterizes it. This is what marks the final phase of world history and of church history before the return of Christ. It's what it contains. It's what it's like. It's characteristics. That's what he's concerned that we would understand, so that we will counter that with the gospel, with what the gospel sets out for us. So it is the age of the Antichrists.

John is simply building on what Jesus himself said, as we'll see in a moment from Matthew chapter 24 and elsewhere. So it's the age, the last hour. It's the age of the Antichrists. But what he's saying is that there are now many Antichrists have come. Maybe that 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, you know there's an emphasis there on the man of sin, the man of perdition, which seems to be a particular figure or individual, or perhaps it's a particular power that's come to be personified. But the Lord is going to destroy him as he comes or at his coming. It may well be the case that that is the Antichrist, the figure predicted, the evil figure that takes up and usurps or seeks to usurp the place of God.

And that before that you have these Antichrists as part of that great movement of darkness or deceit. In any case, you remember that Jesus in Matthew 24 teaches, if I just read a few verses for you, Matthew 24 and verse 5. Here he is saying to the disciples, see that no one leads you astray.

[ 9 : 39 ] For many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ, and they will lead many astray. Then you go to verse 10, the same chapter, and then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures, the one who endures to the end, will be saved. And you find that in verses 23 then, same chapter 23 to 24.

So there was Jesus saying, there is to be a movement prior to his coming over the course of these last years, of these last days of defection, of great opposition to the church and his teaching and to the gospel, where the church is through to the gospel. And John is building on that and saying, the Antichrist that you heard was to come. Now he says, many Antichrists have come.

And what is it that characterizes then these Antichrists? How do we know them? How are they defined? How is he saying to those that are going to read this letter, as he wrote this to them, these Christians of long ago, he is saying, how do we know these Antichrists? How can we tell who they are?

Well, he tells, he says that they are marked by three things. Defection, detection of them, and denial. They are marked firstly by defection. You see there in verse 18, it is the last hour. Therefore we know, because the many Antichrists have come, and there in verse 19, they went out from us, but they were not of us. But if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that it might be complained that they all are not of us. They went out from us.

What is he saying by that? He is saying that this originated in the church. He is saying that this mass defection of these Antichrists began within the fellowship of God's people, actually began within the church that John is here writing to. And we have seen on many occasions, in other contexts in the scriptures, that the most dangerous situation for the church and for the gospel is not persecution from outside, but defection from inside. Where you find defection from the truth on essential foundational doctrines. They went out from us, he is saying. They were not of us. If they had been of us, if they had really belonged to us, they would have been of us, they would have been of us. They were not of us.

[ 12 : 55 ] That it might be complained that they are all not of us. It originated in the church. Satan's most successful strategy and campaign always begins within the church, not outside it. Because when you look at the times of persecution that have arisen against the church, you only need to go to the book of Acts.

You only need to go to these times, even during the apostles' own time in the world, and John was the last of the apostles. Great persecution against the church by Herod, by Roman authorities, by others.

What happens? The church increased. They couldn't stop its growth. They tried as hard as possible, through all the different means that were available to them in persecution. But the church kept on growing, just as Israel and Egypt. Hard as the Egyptians tried to limit their increase and their development as a people, the more they tried, the more they failed. You see, persecution does not actually eradicate the church and their God's blessing. But defection inside. People who actually abandon the gospel and start teaching other things that are heretical, that are damaging to the gospel itself. Well, that's the danger. That's the thing that we have to be most on our guard against. Because where that begins inside the church, you've got a movement of decrease and of decline straight away, in contrast to anything that Satan can do from outside. So he says, they went out from us. And then he says in verse 19, this is how we know that they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. In other words, there is a detection here that the apostle is asking them to use, an element of detection.

These people defected. They left the church. They went out, formed their own group in opposition to the church. And now he says, you can tell that it's the last hour because these are the Antichrists.

They went out, they left the fellowship of the church so that it might be made plain that they are not all not of us. In other words, God's purpose is behind that defection, that movement out of the church. Of course, we have to be very careful we're not misunderstood here because leaving the church or leaving a denomination and entering another denomination, this is not the same as what John, it's not the same as what John is talking about here. And it's not talking about people who've left one particular church for another. It was only one denomination then, if you like, anyway.

[ 15 : 50 ] But what he's talking about here is people leaving the gospel, people leaving the church where the gospel is situated and actually following something that is actually radically different to the gospel, something that is a heresy, something that is actually wrong concerning Jesus Christ as foundational to the gospel. That's what they went out to promote. That's why they couldn't stay within the church because they couldn't actually get this view that they had accepted. They had to leave, there was no option. It was an entirely different gospel that they were promoting and peddling and trying to get others to follow. We'll see later in the passage that they're trying to deceive you still, is what he's saying, in regard to what they're trying to do. So that's what he's saying. They defected. In the defection, you can have a detecting of who they are. They are the Antichrist. They've left the core truths of the gospel behind.

And of course, that's so very much up to date, isn't it? You look out over the state of the world and of the visible church today, and you will find many people that no longer adhere to the core matters of the gospel. That don't have that doctrine of Christ at the heart of things that the gospel itself sets before us. Either denying his resurrection or denying his sufficiency for our salvation and for our justification, for our being set right with God. Whatever it is that's attacking the core elements of the gospel is heretical. That's why it became known to John that these people were heretics. They left these essential things and were promoting other things instead of them. So that's how you detect them, he's saying. But this is the third thing about them, their denial of Jesus Christ in a certain way.

Defection, detection and denial. Well, what is it that they're denying? Well, look at verses 22 and 23. And you can see there, in summary, what they were actually saying. Who is the liar? And when he uses the word liar, he's talking here about something opposite to the truth, the truth as it's in Christ. Because anything opposite to that is a lie. Saw that earlier in the in the epistle as well. Let's read that. 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. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

And then if you go to chapter 4, we read that passage in chapter 4, verses 2 and 3. By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

[ 18 : 42 ] And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the Spirit of the Antichrist. Which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. In other words, he's saying that this is actually what they are denying.

They are denying that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh from God. You could put that another way because it looks like this is really what they were saying. It amounted to a denial that Jesus, the figure of Jesus, the Jesus that's mentioned in the Gospels, the Jesus that the church was talking about and preaching about, they were denying that that Jesus is the Christ that God actually promised.

The Messiah, the Savior, that he is the Christ come in the flesh. That's what they were denying. In other words, they were actually denying the incarnation. They were denying a fundamental doctrine of the faith, of the Gospel. That Jesus is none other than the Son of God in the flesh. The Son of God having taken human nature to himself. Look at the way he mentions there the Father and the Son.

Why is he mentioning the Son? Why is he mentioning the Son? Why does he emphasize there the Father and the Son and the Son along with the Father? Well, because he wants to make it clear that the Jesus they worship, the Jesus they heard about and are hearing about, the Jesus some of them maybe knew even practically and personally, is none other than the Christ in the flesh. The Christ of God.

And you see, the heretics were saying, well, Jesus is special. He was a special man. We don't deny that.

[ 20 : 32 ] He had great abilities. He was a man above most. He was certainly someone that really deserves to be listened to. He was a great teacher. He was a great moral teacher. He was a great philosopher.

But he wasn't God. He wasn't divine. He didn't have that status. Even though he had a great high human status.

And what John is saying, that's not enough. That's not adequate. That's not the Jesus that's preached in the Gospel. Because the Jesus that's preached in the Gospel, he says, is the Christ, the Son of God in the flesh.

That's who he is. That's his identity. That's where he derives his personhood from. It's who he is as the Son of God. It's who he is as the second person of the Trinity that God is.

And so that's why it amounts to the lie or a denial of the truth. And you see, something else that's very important here. Whoever denies the Son who does not confess him to be in reality what he is, denies the Father also.

[ 21 : 44 ] This is the Antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. And if you deny the Son as being in reality, the Jesus in the flesh, then you're denying the Father also.

Because you see, our salvation is Trinitarian all through. What do I mean by that? It means that each of these three persons of the one Godhead are involved in our salvation.

That's so important for us to know and to hold on to. That's why John is writing this. You know what a three-legged stool looks like. Some of you possibly have some in your homes.

They used to be more common than they are now, probably. But a three-legged stool, if you place it on the ground and with its three legs, it's there. It's fine. It's nice and stable.

You can sit on it. It won't collapse under you. You take away one of the legs. It's very different. It collapses.

[ 22 : 43 ] It falls over. And it doesn't matter which one of the three legs you take away. It collapses. The rest don't function the way they should.

And it's the same with God and our salvation. You deny the Father the role that Scripture gives to Him, you've taken away that particular leg, that particular plank of redemption.

You deny the Son the status that the Bible gives Him, you've taken that away. You deny the Spirit, His own personality, and His own role in redemption and applying it to us.

And what happens? The stool collapses. You need the three persons, the way they're clearly delineated in Scripture, in the whole overall emphasis on Scripture. We're not talking about one text, or a text here and there.

You take the accumulated witness of Scripture, of the New Testament especially, and this is what John is saying. If you deny the Son to be in reality what He is, Jesus, the Son of God, then you don't have the Father either.

[ 23 : 47 ] You cannot possess the Father as your Father, unless you possess the Son as your Son, as His Son. That's so important. Because in verse 25 He says something else.

This is the promise that He made to us. Eternal life. That's where it really bears upon our present relationship with God and our future destiny.

Whoever does not have the Son does not have the Father either. If you have the Son, you have the Father also. That's really what He's saying. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

So there's such an important emphasis for us tonight. What's our relationship with God? How do I relate to God tonight? I don't relate to God primarily as a preacher of the Gospel.

That's not going to save me. That's not where the ground of my acceptance with God rests at all. Where is your relationship with God situated?

[ 25 : 01 ] Do you have God as your Father? Is that how you speak to Him? Is that how you know Him? Is that how you relate to Him daily? Is that where He features and how He features in your life?

Is He indeed your Father? Have you accepted the Son as the Son of God in the flesh? Have you embraced Him willingly? Have you placed your confidence, your trust in Him?

Have you taken Him the way the Scripture presents Him to you? The way He's offered in the Scripture? The way He offers Himself? Is anyone here content simply with a merely formal academic knowledge knowledge of Jesus in the Gospel, in the Bible, which is good, but it's not going to save you in itself?

You see, it has to be that you have the Father, that you have the Father through confessing the Son, that Jesus is your Savior, that you have embraced Him, and that He's then introduced you, as it were, to the Father, as your Father, as well as His Father.

So there's, you see, what's so dangerous about the false teaching. It's not just simply wrong about the person of Christ, hugely serious though that is. It's not simply wrong about the person of the Father, hugely serious though that is.

[ 26 : 32 ] It's also wrong about what eternal life consists of. And that's equally serious, isn't it? Because you can only get that right as you get God right.

As you have your view of God right. As you have your understanding of the Father and the Son, and of the Trinity in our salvation. It doesn't mean you need to know everything about the Father and the Son.

We can't have that in this life anyway. It doesn't mean you need to understand fully the operation between them all, but it must, it surely does mean that you must have Him. That He must be in your possession.

That's what we're doing in the Gospel. However much we're doing it in a way that's very inadequate. In a way that can be bettered by many other people.

But as Spurgeon once put it, you will find many places a better preaching, but you will not find a better Gospel or a better Savior or a better God.

[ 27 : 39 ] That's the issue, isn't it? What's my relationship to God tonight? What is God saying to me through this? What's my priority?

What is He still requiring of me? What have I not actually yet done in order that I might be saved? The arrival of the Antichrist.

That's crucial that we have these things right, that we're able to resist and answer the Antichrist the way that we must. And I already told you of movements that are abroad, not just in the nation we belong to, but also in the locality we belong to.

Where you have meetings held weekly on the Lord's Day evenings. Where Christian Rethink, as it's called, is setting out to challenge and to replace certain really crucial doctrines of the Bible, of God's revelation, including the Trinity itself.

I don't want to call anybody a member of the Antichrists. But where you see the core elements of the Gospel abandoned, rejected, replaced, that's where it's coming from.

[ 29 : 00 ] That's the source of it. That's where its roots are. Watch yourselves. Let's look after our young people.

Let's make sure that they know the truth in Jesus, that they know who Jesus is, that they have Jesus for themselves. Let's pray increasingly and increasingly earnestly, as God will enable us, for our young people, for the young people of the church and of this congregation, and for ourselves as adults too, who belong to the congregation, so that we are not carried away, as Paul puts it in Ephesians, by every wind of doctrine and the slight and cunning of men.

How do you do that? Well, that's the second part. More briefly, the answer to the Antichrist. He mentions two protective elements or items, and it's interesting and important what he says about them.

They must both abide in us as God's people. That's what he's saying, first of all, the word that you heard from the beginning. You see, he's saying, I'm not writing to you because you don't know the truth, because you do know it.

That's why I'm writing. Verse 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.

[ 30 : 24 ] And this is the promise he made to us, eternal life. You see, he's talking about the gospel itself. The word that you heard from the beginning. We came across the phrase earlier in the epistle.

What they heard from the apostles like John in the very beginning of the New Testament age. Let that word, he says, abide in you. Don't actually let it be polluted by something else that is suggested as an additive or as an appendix to it.

Let that abide in you. And you see, he's saying, this is your responsibility. You Christians, he's saying, this is your responsibility. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. It's not going to happen automatically, he's saying.

You have to work at it. You have to actually see to it that you're doing this, that you're letting this gospel, this word, abide in you, that it controls your life, that it's that by which you live in your life, that that's what gives shape to your life.

And let it abide in you. Let it abide in you richly, as Paul says elsewhere, as Paul says in another epistle in the New Testament where he says in his letter to the Ephesians, let this word of Christ abide in you richly.

[ 31 : 35 ] Let it abide in you fully. And John is similarly here saying, let this be the case with you. What you heard from the beginning, let it abide, let it be still a controlling influence in your life.

Don't move away from it. Don't put something else in its place. And what Paul wrote to Timothy, one of the last letters to be written in the New Testament, 2 Timothy, remember there that he advised Timothy about things that were going to take place in a short time.

And in 2 Timothy, rather, chapter 4, verses 3 to 4, this is what he's saying. He says, For the time coming, is coming, when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

and they will turn away from listening to the truth and wandering off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded.

But that's what he's saying. The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

[ 32 : 54 ] To say that effectively, this is what we think the gospel should say. This is what we think Paul would have said nowadays. What John would have actually said or phrased in such a way as would meet the needs of the time.

Are we actually saying this is not the word of God? Was God somehow or other caught out when the things of this present age we belong to, this world that we belong to, this generation we belong to, when it arrived, was this word no longer adequate?

Should it not be added to? That's what the heretics are saying. You need an appendix to the word. You need an appendix to the gospel. You need to consider things which the church now has actually received supposedly from God.

Because we need to keep up with developments. We need to keep up with the way the world now is. We need to keep up with human thinking, with human philosophies, with how people look at things today, not how they were in the days of the apostles.

What is John's counter to that? Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. Let that be the crucial controlling influence in your life.

[ 34 : 08 ] Because it's all there. It's all adequate already. The sufficiency of Scripture is one of the great emphases of the Reformation.

and the sufficiency of Scripture effectively means it needs not to be added to or taken from. It's all there already for every generation of people in this world.

You don't need any appendices, however much or persuasive the heretics might appear to be. this is all you need.

First thing, the word itself, the gospel. Secondly, he talks about this anointing. You have been, he says, anointed by the Holy One in verse 20.

Now, it could be, the Holy One could refer to God the Father or God the Son. It doesn't really matter at the end of the day because the anointing, as he goes on later in the chapter, in verse 27, but the anointing that you receive from him abides in.



[ 35 : 15 ] You know, he's saying that against verse 26. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. You see, the fact that they've gone away out of their fellowship, out of the church, out of the circle of the church, doesn't mean they're no longer actively engaged against the church.

Far from it, he's saying, they are still trying to deceive you. That's just how it works, isn't it? Heretics don't stop plaguing the church once they leave. And set up another group themselves.

Well, their concern is to pass on the so-called superior teaching that they have to those who are still left floundering in those matters just of the gospel itself.

That's the kind of thing that they have in their thinking. Oh, he says, they're trying to deceive you, but the anointing that you receive from him abides in you. Now, we can't go back really in the time available to the Old Testament, to the anointings that are mentioned.

Kings were anointed, prophets anointed, kings and so on. Anointing basically was illustrative of the power of God or of the Spirit of God coming upon a person.

[ 36 : 24 ] And in the New Testament, anointing effectively means the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of God comes upon or into a person.

that's really what lies at the heart of a Christian life. Where does the power of that life come from? Where does the power for perseverance come from? Where does the teaching actually come from?

Where does the instruction come from primarily? It comes from the Spirit of God. You have the anointing. And he says, you have no need that anyone should teach.

You know, of course, that can be also misconstrued and misapplied. If you are just simply taking that literally without qualification, you might conclude tonight, that's fine, we don't need James McKeever anymore.

I've got the Holy Spirit I can actually do without the preaching of the Gospel. This is saying to me, you have the anointing and you have no need that anyone should teach. You know, obviously that's not what it means.

[ 37 : 24 ] It means that when they're resisting the heretics, they have to resist the teaching that says, the Holy Spirit as you know it is not enough. We have something to supplement that.

We have something to add to that. Something that you'll benefit from that you don't yet have. And John is saying, you have everything you need. You have the Word and you have the Spirit.

You have the anointing. He is your head teacher. Yes, he uses the instrumentality of preachers of the Word. That's what we're called to do and to be.

But he is the head teacher. It is through us that he teaches. We are not the teachers. He is.

And what he's saying is the anointing that you have received, have received from the Holy One teaches you about everything or teaches you all things, all categories that you need to know.

[ 38 : 26 ] He teaches you. the anointing takes care of it. It's not that you need something long after you've been converted through some process or other that people take you through or steps towards this anointing.

You have the anointing from the moment of your rebirth, of your conversion within your rebirth. because everybody who is newly created in Christ has the Holy Spirit from that point onwards.

It doesn't mean they have full understanding of what that means or full appreciation of it. But the reality, the fact of it is after that you believed, as Paul says to the Ephesians, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

The promised Holy Spirit came and he came into your life the moment God changed you spiritually. He's saying to him here, that anointing, that's true and is no lie and it's sufficient for you.

So you see you have the two wonderful elements that are sufficient fully in themselves. The gospel, the word of God and the anointing, the spirit of God.

[ 39 : 57 ] The confession of faith in the first chapter deals with the word of God. I'm not going to read through this passage even. It's the fifth paragraph of the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

But he talks there about a number of things in the word already where it abundantly evidences itself it says to be the word of God. In other words, there's plenty in that that gives evidence this is the word of God, this Bible is the word of God.

But he's saying notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of it is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit and then listen to this bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.

That last phrase is very important. The spirit does not persuade us of the divine origin and full authority of this word as the word of God without using the word.

It's the spirit inwardly by and with the word witnessing in our hearts. It's never the word without the spirit that's persuasive.

[ 41 : 07 ] It's never the spirit without the word because that's what the spirit uses. And so tonight examine your relationship with God.

Ask yourself where would I be in this letter that we suggested at the beginning tonight if he was going to write to us tonight as Dornoway Free Church. What would that letter contain?

Where would I feature in what God would write to this congregation? Where am I in relation to God the Father? Where am I in relation to God the Son?

Have I come to confess him as my Savior? If not publicly then in your own heart at least have you made that confession to himself and to the Father?

and how are we protected against the Antichrists around us? Because the Antichrists are here and they're here to the end of the world.

[ 42 : 09 ] However many periods of revival you have within the last days even within the last hour and there may be many still but this John says is how we know it's the last hour because the Antichrists have arrived.

Never mind yes it's important yes there's serious threats yes there's serious in their assaults upon the Gospel but God's people have something far superior. You have his Word you have his Spirit.

And the Antichrists are saying to you look follow us into the deep follow us away from the shallows of what you've got there that you've always had in the Gospel for X number of generations this is a new age come on let's follow us into the deep of further knowledge further philosophies further human discoveries further things that we want to actually say are necessary for us to be right with God.

What do you say to that? You say to that well I already have launched into the deep you've left the deep you've left Christ you've left that foundation and I don't want to go back to the shallows of philosophy and human ingenuity and human inventions and these kind of suppositions these are the shallows and we've left the shallows haven't we?

and by faith in Christ he's enabled us to launch out into the deep the deep things of his salvation where he is central where he is foundational where he the son of God is the Christ come in the flesh and God bless his word to us again this evening let's conclude