



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The First Catholic Epistle of St. John

Chapter 2

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Introduction

- We have an Advocate who is also the propitiation for our sins and to truly know Him we must keep His commandments (1-6). All the commandments could be summarized in loving one another (7-11)
- Describing their spiritual state (12-14), St. John cautions against loving the world and being deceived by antichrists (15-23), by letting truth abide in them and they in Christ (24-29)



Christ is our Advocate (2:1-2)

- My little children: words of affection from so aged a teacher as St. John
- He writes to exhort them to a pure and holy life
- If any brother, any of you, should be overtaken by sin, there is a way of forgiveness
- They must not sin, but if unhappily one does sin, let him go to Christ, the Advocate
- Christ pleads with the Father through His righteousness not to withdraw His love



Christ is our Advocate (2:1-2)

- The mercy seat of the Tabernacle where God met man was called the propitiation
- Propitiation means to cover
- Christ is our mercy seat, where God meets us in mercy and forgiveness
- Christ's offering is for all. He tasted death for every man (Heb 2:9)
- But His advocacy is only for those who accepted His propitiation

The Test of Knowing Him (2:3-11)



- The evidences that we have a knowledge of Christ is loyal obedience to His commandments
- If one claims to have a knowledge of Christ, yet lives in disobedience, he is a liar
- It is by keeping His commandments that the love of God is made perfect in us
- Obedience is the result and proof of love, and also gives love the opportunity to flow over the whole life

The Test of Knowing Him (2: 3-11)



- The relationship is progressed from knowing Him (knowledge) to being in Him (fellowship)
- Now there is a third level which is abiding constantly in Him
- Who abides in Christ, and lives by the life which Christ imparts, must show that life by a life like that of Christ
- We can describe the life of Christ is a life of love to the Father and to the people

The Test of Knowing Him (2:3-11)



- The commandment (old) which was given to them from the very beginning is the gospel of love
- Yet this commandment is in one sense new, as it takes a new dimension in the life of Christians
- The true love is shown in the life of Christ and in your life when you abide in Him
- The truth of love is shown because you have come out of the darkness to the light that shines
- He that keeps the love walks in the light

The Test of Knowing Him (2:3-11)



- If one hates his brother he is in darkness
- Brotherly love shows that one abides in the light
- Because he walks in the light and can see where he walks, he cannot stumble
- He who hates is not following Christ, the Light, and hence walks in the darkness
- His behaviors is not rational or even moral
- Hence, he cannot see the dangers that plagued him on account of the darkness



Their Spiritual State (2:12-14)

- St. John calls all the saints little children. Then he divides them into three classes, fathers, young men, and little children (1 Jn 2:13)
- I write to you in the light of your new state in Christ after having your sins forgiven
- These fathers did not know Christ in the flesh, but walked with Christ long and realized His presence
- The special excellence of these youth is that they have overcome the temptations of the evil one



Their Spiritual State (2:12-14)

- The little ones have known the Father, and can say, “Our Father who art in heaven”
- The knowledge of God for the children is that He is their father, when they overcome the evil one as youth, as they grow older, their knowledge of God becomes more mature and experiential
- The secret of victory and strength for youth is when they let the word of God abide in them
- The wicked one is the prince of this world

Do Not Love the World (2:15-17)



- An exhortation to all three classes just named in
- The love of the world and of God are not reconcilable
- Things in the world: the ways of the world, its passions, pleasures and pursuits
- This sinful world has three heads
- The desires from the appetites and passions
- the desires aroused by appeals made to our eyes

Do Not Love the World (2:15-17)



- The vain glory of the world; sensuality, greed and pride, illustrate what is meant
- The three main sins are love of pleasure, materialism, and pride
- These are the three temptations of the mountain
- Also the three vows of monasticism: celibacy, poverty, and obedience
- All things are transient but he who does the will of God builds on eternal foundations

Deceptions of the Last Hour (2:18-23)



- We are in the last dispensation (Creation – Law – Prophets – Christ)
- False christs and those opposed to Christ. Anti-Christ is Anti-Christianity
- Their appearance is a part of the series of events which leads to the final consummation
- This implies that these antichrists were apostates
- The worst men are often those who were once outwardly religious and have fallen away

Deceptions of the Last Hour (2:18-23)



- Had they been true and genuine Christians they could hardly have fallen into such enmity
- Their going away and bitter opposition show that they were not real converts
- You are anointed with the Holy Spirit (myron)
- Christian means an anointed one; Anti-Christ would mean against the Anointed
- Hence St. John reminds them that they have been anointed by the Holy One

Deceptions of the Last Hour (2:18-23)



- All things needful to guard against these opponents and seducing teachers
- It is the privilege of those who have this anointing to know Christ experimentally
- St. John writes to them since they know the truth, and how to discern between the truth and lies
- Hence they will know how to reject these antichrists who lyingly deny Jesus Christ
- Those who reject the Son cannot have the Father

Let Truth Abide in You (2:24-27)



- The truth concerning the Father and the Son which Anti-Christ denies
- He who remains steadfast in this faith will continue in the Son, and in the Father
- This promise, [even] eternal life, is made to all who abide in the Son and in the Father
- All these words about Anti-Christ; is to put them on their guard against false teachers
- The anointing guards them from the false teachers



Let Truth Abide in You (2:24-27)

- The passage does not teach a continuous revelation, or that we are to be led by the inner light, but that God has given us means of knowing whether men speak the truth
- There is another fountain of knowledge so that you need not the aid of these opposing teachers
- It was the promise of Christ that the Spirit should guide you into all the truth (John 16:13)
- The Holy Spirit gives us the spiritual gifts



Let Truth Abide in You (2:24-27)

- Among these gifts were wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, and discerning of spirits
- These gifts continued until the Holy Spirit had prepared the New Testament to guide the church
- Now we have the Word of God and the church, which the Holy Spirit has given us
- The presence of the Spirit makes us for understanding
- The Word and the unction still teach us all things



The Children of God (2:28-29)

- Abide in Him by continuing in the truth taught of Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, and the church
- This is the guarantee that we will not be ashamed in the judgment day
- A life of righteousness shows that we have the life of Christ, and hence is proof that we have been born of him
- If we are born of Him then we are His children, eligible for inheritance



Conclusion

- What does "Jesus Christ is our advocate with the Father" mean?
- Jesus is called Advocate (Paraclete) and the Holy Spirit is also called Paraclete. What is the difference?
- What is a **propitiation**? How did Jesus fulfill this function?
- How many times you read "He who says.." ? What is the lesson each time?
- What do you think it means to us "to walk as Jesus did"? What does that look like in our life?



Conclusion

- Why do you think love is connected to live in light? Why are hypocrisy and hatred such indicators of darkness?
- Who is the antichrist and the antichrists? What kinds of antichrists exist today?
- What are the lusts that are that are in the world? Relate them to the temptation on the mount.
- But you have an anointing from the Holy One," what is that anointing? What is its effect in us?
- Read "Do not love the world" (1 John 2:15) and "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16). What is meant by "the world" in each verse?