

4. The package deal from heaven

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We all have heard about a phrase “package deal”. Let’s say I want to purchase one particular merchandise from a seller. But the seller made a stipulation that for me to buy that merchandise from him, I have to take the other product that comes with. That is what we called package deal. In other words, I cannot say, “I want this, but not that one.” I must take both if I want one.

This might be a crude illustration to explain what the Father in heaven show to us, but it kinda makes sense to us. Here is the package deal from heaven:

To get to heaven and have eternal life in God, we have to accept the Father God in heaven as one true God.

To accept the Father God in heaven as one true God, we have to accept the Son Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and our God.

To accept the Son Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and our God, after we receive Him into our hearts, we have to live according to His way.

To live according to His way, we have to not to love the world or the things in the world.

You see how they are all connected? We cannot take one and say, “No thanks,” to the others. That is what apostle John is going to explain to us this morning through his letter 1 John.

A. LOVE NOT THE WORLD

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or 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, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Worldliness is not so much a matter of activity as of attitude. It is possible for a Christian to stay away from questionable entertainments and doubtful places and still love the world, because worldliness is a matter of the heart.

Worldliness not only affects our response to the love of God, it also affects our response to the will of God.

Doing the will of God is a joy for those living in the love of God. But when a believer loses his enjoyment of the Father’s love, he finds it hard to obey the Father’s will.

Many things in this world are definitely wrong and God’s Word identifies them as sins. Stealing, lying, murdering, sexual sins are wrong. But there are areas of Christian conduct that are not so clear and about which even the best Christians disagree. In such cases, each believer must apply the test to his own life and be honest in his self-examination, remembering that even a good thing may rob a believer of his enjoyment of God’s love and his desire to do God’s will.

Apostle John points out that the world system uses three devices to trap Christians:

Genesis 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (the lust of the flesh), that it was pleasant to the eyes (the lust of the eyes), and a tree desirable to make one wise (the pride of life), she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

1) **The lust of the flesh** – It includes anything that appeals to man’s fallen nature. It refers to the basic nature of unspiritual man that makes him blind to spiritual truth. When we trust Christ, we become “partakers of the divine nature”. A Christian has both the old nature and the new nature in his life.

2) **The lust of the eyes** – It tempts us to indulge them in sinful ways. Back in the days of the Apostle John, the Greeks and Romans lived for entertainments and activities that excited the eyes. Times have not changed very much! In view of television, magazine, billboard and anything to do with visual, there are temptations to bring us down to pit.

3) **The pride of life** – God’s glory is rich and full, but man’s glory is vain and empty. People have always tried to outdo others in their spending and their getting – keeping up with the Jones. The boastful pride of life motivates much of what such people do. The bottom line idea of the pride of life is making ourselves better than others including God at any cost.

It is important to note that no Christian becomes worldly all of a sudden. We don’t wake up one morning and say, “I think I am going to backslide today.” Worldliness creeps up on a believer. It is a gradual process of spiritual erosion. First is the friendship of the world. A Christian who becomes a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

B. THE LAST HOUR AND THE ANTICHRIST

1 John 2:18-19 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. 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 they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

You may ask, “But if it was ‘the last hour’ in John’s day, why has Jesus not yet returned? I thought there is only one Antichrist. But the Bible says “many antichrists”. Is the Bible contradicting itself?” No, it never contradicts itself. We are the one who don’t understand it well. However, these are excellent questions and Scripture gives us the answers.

God is not limited by time the way we humans are. God works in human time, but He is above time. “The last hour” began back in John’s day and has been growing in intensity ever since. There were ungodly false teachers in John’s day, and during the intervening centuries they have increased both in number and in influence. “The last hour” or “the last times” are phrases that describe a kind of time, not a duration of time.

The Antichrist, an individual who has captured the wild imagination of many people, including those who don’t even know the Bible. Many are ignorant about this person called the Antichrist, except what they have learned from movies like The Omen.

The “Antichrist” is used in the Bible only by John. It describes three things:

- 1) A spirit in the world that opposes or denies Christ
- 2) The false teachers who embody this spirit
- 3) A person who will head up the final world rebellion against Christ.

The prefix 'anti' actually has a dual meaning. It can mean, in the Greek, both "against" Christ and "instead of" Christ. Satan in his frenzy is fighting Christ and His eternal truth, and he is using his counterfeits as substitutes to be our Lord Jesus.

The "spirit of antichrist" is in the world today. It will eventually lead to the appearance of a "satanic superman" whom the Bible calls "Antichrist" with a capital A. He is called "the man of sin" or "lawlessness".

Since Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy for the President of the United States for 2008 election, we can tell that the final world stage is set for a political and economic "satanic superman" to arise, a single political leader to organize a world-dominating confederation of nations. National leaders speak of a new world order, but no one has been able to really define it, much less lead it. Yet this leader, the Antichrist is coming.

V19 is very disturbing verse and we should make a note of it. Apostle John is telling us that there are many who make professions of being Christians, but they are not really Christians. It doesn't matter how you look at this from the viewpoint of once-you-are-saved-you-are-permanently-saved or you-can-lose-your-salvation. Either way, both camps will declare that this is not a Christian. He just pretends to be.

If you will investigate the history of the cults and antichristian religious systems in today's world, you will find that in most cases their founders started out in a local church or Christian school. They were "with us" but not "of us," so they went out "from us" and started their own anti-Christian groups.

C. THE PACKAGE DEAL FROM HEAVEN

1 John 2:20-25 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that He has promised us--eternal life.

When the New Testament speaks of anointing, it speaks of it as the common property of all believers. But among some Christians today, there is a rather magical or superstitious approach to this idea of anointing. In their mind, the anointing is like someone lays a hand on a person and start to fall backward or a charismatic leader blows a breath to a whole group and everyone in the group fall backward.

I don't see anywhere in the Bible that we are supposed to do that kind of thing. I know that you might think about what Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane to the soldiers who tried to arrest Him. Jesus merely spoke to them in His divine authority and didn't ask for money for their fundraising either. The only reasons why I think those people fall backward are, first, it could be the bad breath from the leader or second, none of them wanted to be the one who would stand there as an unspiritual person.

According to the Bible we have, no one, I mean, no one can go to heaven unless he or she accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Without that personal relation-

ship and faith in Him, we cannot accept the fact that Jesus who is God Himself died for our sins and we couldn't get to the Father except through Him.

Every single cult has one thing in common. They all deny the deity of Jesus Christ. They would say, "He was a great man," or "He was an outstanding teacher," but not God. As the part of the package deal from heaven is that we have to accept and believe that Jesus is God who incarnated to become the perfect sacrifice no human could ever be. If we don't accept that fact, the rest of the deal would fall through.

Humans, by nature, are almost always attracted to something just because it is new. We almost always think of new as better. But when it comes to truth, new is not better. That which you heard from the beginning is better. When we are living in the simplicity of the truth of Jesus Christ, then we will abide in the Son and in the Father.

D. LET THE TRUTH ABIDE IN US

1 John 2:26-27 These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. 27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

Jesus calls Satan the "father of lies" in John 8. Satan is not an originator. He is a counterfeiter. He counterfeits the work of God. Satan has counterfeit "ministers" who preach a counterfeit gospel that produces counterfeit Christians who depend on a counterfeit righteousness.

We are warned against letting any man be our teacher, because God has given us the Holy Spirit to teach us His truth. This does not deny the office of human teachers in the church according to Eph. 4:12. But it means that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit you must test the teaching of men as you search the Bible for yourself.

I've noticed that some churches don't even use the Bible to teach their congregation. I don't know what they can teach better than the Bible. It is no wonder why their congregation don't even carry their Bibles to the church.

E. WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE IN JESUS

1 John 2:28-29 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

Abiding in Jesus means that we need not be afraid or ashamed when Jesus returns. This is because we have intimately known Him, and we can have confidence at His coming.

Apostle John brings up a challenging image. When Jesus returns, some people will be afraid, because they never knew Jesus at all. But among those who know Him, they may not be afraid, but they will be ashamed before Him at His coming. They will realize that they have been living worldly and unfruitful lives. I hope and pray that none of us would be ashamed in His presence.

1 Corinthians 3:15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) If we ignore or neglect any part of the Bible, we invite trouble. We must read and study the whole Book, and be able to handle it accurately. Although all of the Bible was written for us, not all of it was written to us. False teachers, however, pick – out of context – only what they want, and often apply to believers today passages that were given only for ancient Israel.

2) We will not perfect righteousness until we are glorified with Jesus. But we can practice righteousness right now, as we are born of Him.

3) A Christian who becomes a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

4) When we are living in the simplicity of the truth of Jesus Christ, then we will abide in the Son and in the Father.