



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 John 2:18-21

"The Last Hour and the Doctrinal Test"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] In case some of you are thinking about staying home and ordering the tape, the tape will not be available until nineteen-hundred and ninety-two. [Laughter] So if you want to really stay up with things, you should be here on Wednesday night. Those of you who attended our Saturday of two weeks ago in which we tried to deal with John Wimber and his movement, John Hannah dealing with the church history side of the question, and I was dealing with the movement in the light of the New Testament, might think that what I'm doing is repeating, but that is not true. What I want to do is to analyze the theology that lies back of Wimber's movement and take a look at some of the overall theological significance of the Signs and Wonders movement and the way in which the word of God is treated by that movement. So we hope that you will come out on Wednesday night. Curt Daniel is at a conference in Michigan, I believe, and that's the reason that I'm filling in for him on Wednesday night.

Returning to 1 John chapter 2 and reading verses 18 through 21 for our Scripture reading,

"Little children, it is the last time: (Now I'm reading from the Authorized Version, as those of you who have been attending know, literally the original text says, 'a last

hour', 'Little children, it is a last hour,' that is such a time as a last hour.) And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time (or a last hour). They went out from us, (that 'they' obviously refers to the antichrists he's just mentioned) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

Now if you have an Authorized Version as I do, you'll notice those words, 'no doubt' are italicized, that is the translator simply let you know they are not in the original text, they have supplied them in order to give what they thought was the sense. The peculiar sense, however, of the little phrase, *no doubt* is to introduce doubt. They would *no doubt* have continued with us. To say they would have continued with us is much more precise and definite than they would no doubt have continued with us. So I can only say that there must have been some secret Arminians in that particular translating session that insisted in the addition of *no doubt*. What John says is if they had been of us they would have continued with us. It is that definite. The 20th verse continues, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One," incidentally, the Holy One is clearly in the context the Lord Jesus Christ, so we are not going to try to expound that aspect of it in the exposition. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

Now here we have one of the many cases in the New Testament in which the manuscripts that we have differ. Some of them have, "ye have all things," and there is some substantial manuscript support for that. If that is the meaning then the sense is ye know all things concerning the subject of which we are speaking. That is the sonship and messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, certain manuscripts, generally more highly by contemporary texture critics have not "ye know all things," but "And ye all know," and in that sense the meaning is that they have universally a certain knowledge that comes from the possession of the anointing from the holy one. We're going to take it

that way and expound the text that way, but it is possible that the other is what John wrote. The difference is the difference between, even if you don't know any Greek, you can see how close they are, the difference between the Greek word *panta* and *pantes*. And since we have *pantes* in the context, there is even more reason for some confusion. And finally in the 21st verse the apostle writes, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth."

May the Lord bless this reading of His word, and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this day that Thou hast given to us. We acknowledge, Lord, all of the blessings that are ours in common grace, the blessings of food and clothing and all of the other things that come from a good and loving Father in heaven. We thank Thee for the marvelous way in which Thou hast blessed the creation. And we thank Thee that by Thy grace, we can see the hand of the eternal God in the created world, seeing his eternal power and deity.

And we thank Thee too that, in the revelation of the goodness and kindness of God, we have an indication of the kind of Father we have in heaven. But most of all, we reflect in the way in which Thou hast loved us in the gift of redeemer, for we are sinners and need redemption. And we thank Thee for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the preeminent gift, in special distinguishing grace, for us by which we've been brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee Lord for the redemption, the forgiveness of sins, the endowment with the holy Spirit as a permanent indwelling presence in the lives of believers for the adoption of sons of the living God, and all of the other blessings, so many that we could not possible name them all, which make Thee out as a God of grace and love through Christ. We worship Thee Lord. We worship Thee in gratitude and praise and thanksgiving.

We thank Thee too Lord for all of the other blessings Thou hast showered upon us, the blessing of the United States of America in which we live. We pray Thy blessing upon our country, our President, and particularly those with him and upon him in these days of discussion and negation in Moscow.

Father we thank Thee for the whole church of Jesus Christ, those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ, and those who may see things somewhat differently in the Christian world, but nevertheless trust in him who loved us and gave himself for us. We pray for them as the word of God goes forth. May it go forth in purity, and may there be responsiveness to it wherever Christ is proclaimed. Bless that that has already gone forth and that that is to go forth. Exalt and magnify the Son of God whose we are and whom we serve.

Especially we pray for the sick and others who have trials and difficulties in their lives, some in the hospital here in Dallas. We pray for them. And we ask that Thou will minister to those who minister to them and within Thy grace and mercy and purpose Lord, grant healing.

Bless our elders and our deacons and the testimony of Believers Chapel. May by Thy grace we remain staunchly wedded to the word of God as expressed in the holy Scriptures. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for today is "The Last Hour and the Doctrinal Test." The apostle has been setting forth some tests to which he wishes his readers to submit. He has spoken of a moral test. We know that we know him if we keep his commandments. He has also spoken of a social test, and he has exhorted them to love their brethren saying that the one who loves his brethren abides in the light, but he that hateth his brother is in darkness and walketh in darkness and doesn't know where he's going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Now, he turns to what could be called a doctrinal test, and essentially, it is an allegiance to the sonship and messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. He states for example in verse 22, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." Along the way in these verses that I have just read, the apostle touches such truths as the antichrist and the nearness of the end, verse 18. He discusses, in one of the great texts on the subject, the perseverance of the saints in the 19th verse. And finally in verse 20 and verse 21, he discusses the unction, or the indwelling, of the divine pedagogue, the Holy Spirit.

Now, it's clear, as we've been saying, that while John is called the apostle of love that he is intensely interested in theological truth. It's very unfortunate that in our society, and even in our Christian evangelical society, when we think of the word of God, and men begin to talk about the word of God, they frequently oppose love and theology. Nothing could be more contrary to the fabric of holy Scripture, to the truths of the word of God. There is no such thing at all as Christian love without Christian theology. And the apostle of love, over and over again, up to this point in his epistle, has made that point, and he will continue to do it.

A little while back I read an article entitled, "Theology, Open to What." Anthony Robinson, writing in the *Christian Century*, said that he, as a person identified with the reformed community, had occasion to read a number of church profiles, congregation's self descriptions of them covering such things as their history, the composition of their membership, and goals. One section of the profile, he said, asks congregations to describe their "theological stance." He said, "I was struck in my unscientific sample by how many congregations responded by using the words, 'open' or 'diverse' to answer this question, to answer what is your theological stance." One might expect to find such words as "liberal" versus "conservative", liberal, conservative, but they were relatively infrequent expressions, "Open" and "diverse," very common.

Notable also, he said, was the absence of theological terms such as grace, sin, mercy, and judgment. There was mention of certain particular theologies. Processed theology was mentioned. Liberation theology was mentioned. Both of those were the exceptions. More often there was some elaboration on the theme of diversity, such as, to quote one of them, "Our congregation contains a great variety of theological view points," or "We have almost as many theologies as we have members." Mr. Robinson went on to say one wonders if congregations gave much thought to what such comments actually say. What do you say when you say that, "we have almost as many theologies as members?" What do you say when you say, "Our congregation contains a great variety of theological view points?" He said also, as a man who comes from the reform tradition, in all the profiles there was no mention of the reform tradition or of any theme deriving from that, what we would call a theme of doctrines of sovereign grace.

He then goes on to mention Allan Bloom's great book, which has been so popular over the past year, *The Closing of the American Mind*. Professor Bloom focuses his critical sites on openness. If you've read the book you'll recognize that, by which he means a relativistic view of truth, one which counts intolerance a much more grievous sin error. In other words, the greatest of the sins is intolerance, not being wrong, and ironically, Bloom argues that openness is the great virtue of our day. "The only virtue," is the expression he uses of our times. We've been taught to be nonjudgmentally open, come what may. The pursuit of truth is forgotten and dismissed in the effort to accept everything.

According to the apostle's openness, Professor Bloom has said, "The true believer is the real danger. The study of history and of culture teaches that all the world was mad in the past; men always thought they were right, and that led to wars, persecutions, slavery, xenophobia, racism and chauvinism." The point Professor Bloom made was we ought not to correct the mistakes and really be right; rather the real wrong is to think that you are right at all. In other words, just be open don't try to really find what is right, acknowledge that many have thought they were right and were wrong, but still to be

right, to find the truth, is a laudable goal, but that is gone. So in the prevalence of the terms "open" and "diverse", Mr. Robinson said, "Many churches, it is obvious, abandoned any notion of transcendent truth, they've all become functional antinomians." That is anything goes in the congregation as long as we are nonjudgmental, to be open to be diverse is a great virtue, to really look for truth, and perhaps come to aspects of it, is a mistake.

Now we have that problem in churches just like Believers Chapel, in the evangelical world. It's proper to have openness in one sense, and it's improper to have openness in one sense. It's surely improper to be open in the sense of open to every kind of doctrine, approving every kind of doctrine, approving diverse theologies that are contradictory. That kind of openness, the Scriptures, the apostles, never would support, never. Never can you find that in the word of God. On the other hand, it is perfectly proper for us to be open in the sense that we do wish to know what the truth is, and to be willing to consider other approaches to truth. It's possible to have openness to the evidence and at the same time have no final openness with reference to the teaching of the word of God. The openness that says there's really no truth, all lifestyles are of equal value, it doesn't matter too much what you believe so long as you're happy or on the way to happiness, is a corrupt openness.

Now it's evident the Apostle John would never have believed such a thing as that. He would never have practiced such a thing as that, if so he could never have written these verses that we have just read for the Scripture reading today. Mr. Robinson goes on and tells an amusing story of a church school teacher who told him about meeting with the high school class at the beginning of the year to discuss the options for the curriculum for the high school class in the church. And after the teaching team outlined to the class a program in self esteem and sexuality, the students said, "That sounds ok, but we get that in school, do you think we could study the Bible?" That's pathetic. That is really pathetic.

Going up to Philadelphia this week to speak at the commencement of Westminster Seminary, and for a couple of days before, I was reading a book entitled, *The Reformed Imperative*, by John Leith, who was Pemberton Professor of Theology at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. And Professor Leith subtitles his book, *What the Church Can Say and No One Else Can Say, or What the Church Alone Can Say*. That's what we're really interested in, what the church only can say, the things concerning the word of God. That's what John is writing about. He's writing about things the church alone can say in the Christian faith.

Now we've said he's the apostle of love. It's obvious he's the apostle of truth as well. He's referred to his opponents indirectly, up to this point, if you've been reading along, I hope you have. You get so much more out of the message if you read the Bible. In fact, you may even find some things that would correct the exposition that you have been listening to if you read the Bible, but at any rate you have noticed that John uses the expression, "if we say," "if we say," "if we say," "he that saith," "he that saith." The apostle has been referring indirectly to the enemies of the truth, but now he confronts them directly. In verse 18 he says, "it is the last hour: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists," and in the very next verse he will say, "They went out from us." So now the enemies become clearer. It's evident they were individuals who were in the local church that John is speaking to, addressing his epistle to.

So, first of all then, in the 18th verse, he speaks about the antichrists and the end. It's a natural transition, he's just said in verse 17, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." So speaking about the end of things, it's not surprising that he should say, "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists." I don't think John was mistaken. He's not saying this is the last hour as if we've reached the stage where we cannot go many more years without the coming again of our Lord Jesus.

He's describing it as a last hour, and what he is simply saying is that this whole age between the first coming and the second coming might be called the last times, and to say, it's a last hour is to describe the times. These times have stretched out now for nineteen hundred years.

John Henry Neumann, as one of the commentator's points out, commenting upon this, makes the point that to the apostles all of the present time could be described as five minutes before midnight. In other words, this era from the first coming to the Second Coming is a last hour. It is the last times. And John, in seeing the rise of the antichrist and knowing that the final period just before the appearance of our Lord would be characterized by the historical appearance of one who is called in Scripture, "the Antichrist, the man of sin, the beast" of Revelation 13, is simply saying that along the way these individuals who have appeared from time to time denying Christian truth are antichrists. That is, they are little antichrists who are foreshadowing the appearance of the antichrist. So assuming the guise of Christ and yet opposing Christ, these individuals are the forerunners.

They are the agents, in one sense, of Satan himself who is the Ape of Christ and who has as his own Messiah, the man of sin. That, it seems to me, is what John is saying. He is looking about him. He sees already at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, now fifty or sixty years after the appearance of our Lord, the appearing of individuals within the Christian community, within the Christian professing community, who are denying the person of Christ. They do not believe that he is the Messiah. They do not believe that he has a special relationship to the Father and is the Son of God.

Now, of course there have been other anticipations of this in the past, John is speaking specifically of those who were there. We could go back, and we could see an Antiochus Epiphanes. We could see an Gaius. We can see in the Roman Legionnaires of 70 A.D. and many others down through the years who have anticipated in typical fashion, the appearance of the antichrist in the future. John says that the significance of this is that

when we see these individuals appearing, we know that it is such a time as a last hour. So in other words, the appearance of these individuals is really something that should comfort a Christian because it lets him know that the promises of the word of God, and the things the word of God say about the future, are things that are in process of coming to pass.

Now, we go on to the next verse, verse 19, where the apostle speaks of perseverance and the reality of faith. He says, concerning these antichrists, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Here is a doctrinal test in the reality of the possession of faith. It's a test of perseverance. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

Now what do we mean when we say perseverance? If you know anything about Christian theology, you know that one of the doctrines of Christian faith, propounded by many, is the perseverance of the saints. What is meant by "the perseverance of the saints?" There are different ways to define this incidentally, but basically they all say something like this, negatively, it's not the doctrine that the believer's saved no matter what his practice may be. This overlooks our new nature that we have by virtue of the new birth. It overlooks the fact that God disciplines his family, and furthermore it overlooks the fact that the Scriptures do speak of rewards. But positively, it means that God secures in grace the salvation of true believers keeping them from sinning as a practice as a bent of life and from final apostasy. To put it another way, it is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of the divine grace that is begun in the heart through the spirit, is continued and brought to completion. Put in a simple way, it means simply that someone that has come to faith in Christ, genuine faith in Christ will not apostatize from the faith. That's impossible.

Now when John says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us," he is expressing precisely that. Now of course, the reason that men persevere is not because of anything that is within them. It's because, essentially, God perseveres in bringing to completion the work that he has begun. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, he said, "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ." So if the work has begun, if it is a genuine work that has been begun, God will perform it to completion. So that the believer can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of salvation but will persevere to the end and be eternally saved.

Jonathan Edwards once said, "The sure proof of election is that one perseveres until the end." That's a good statement. It's true. That is true. Or put another way, continuance is the test of reality. So when we talk about the doctrinal test, as expressed here, the subject is continuance in the faith. He who continues is passing the test. These individuals did not pass the test.

Now, occasionally you will run across some people who will say well you believe that once you have believed in Christ you will never fall away. But I know someone who has fallen away. Bob Jones, well you might think I'm talking about the first president of Bob Jones University, so let me change that. Bob Smith was in a meeting. The gospel was preached. He received the gospel. He was a happy Christian for a year or two, but then he became a little cold. He drifted away. He never comes in to a church at the present moment. He's living a life that is total contrary to the word of God and engaged in, and you can name the sins. I know someone who was saved and who is lost. That's proof from experience, of course. I know such a person.

Now we've been talking about the fact that it's not experience that alters theology, it's theology that alters the experience. But then you will say to that individual, who says to you next, I know what you Calvinists are going to say. You're going say he was never saved to begin with. You know that's exactly right. That's what John says here. That's

exactly what John says. I'm only repeating what John says. He says, "They went out from us, because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." They were with us, but they didn't continue with us. They looked just like all the other people in the local church to whom John, or at least who he was including in his address. They were just like the rest, just like you folks in this congregation here. And no doubt, that means there's a little doubt, no doubt, there may be some in this congregation, who are not really "of us", that is of us believers, not of Believers Chapel, not of believers.

And the time will come when it will become manifest. Or maybe by hypocrisy you can cover it all up and you can die just as a professing church member. But not really be "of us", that is, of individuals who have been, through the Holy Spirit, convinced of their sin, regenerated, given new life, brought to faith and trust in the redeemer who died for sinner's sins on Calvary's cross. So yes, I answer that way. I answer that way because it's the apostolic way to answer. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

These dissenting teachers, later on John in the 4th chapter will talk about false prophets who have gone out and this, I think, is probably the group he's referring to. They never belonged in heart. They were not "of us." They weren't expelled. They excommunicated. They left voluntarily. They were Judas'. That's exactly what Judas did. He was one of the twelve. Think of it, on Judas' tombstone you could put, "Apostle of Jesus Christ, chosen by the Lord." Think of that, "Apostle of Jesus Christ, chosen by the Lord." But when the twelve met in the upper room with our Lord, and you know what happened there, finally John writes in the 13th chapter of his gospel, the 30th verse, "And Judas immediately went out and it was night." That's John's way of saying he went out into darkness.

But darkness was already in his heart, and in fact, the very term, the exact expression in, "He went out immediately," is the very verb that's found here. "They went

out from us." Look it up Rich, it's the same. He's using his Greek testament up here, like a good young theological student should. And the same expression is used. "They went out," Judas'. So you see, what really takes place when these antichrists company with the saints over a period of time and then finally leave, they cannot stand it any longer. You know those people who do not belong to our Lord cannot stand the preaching of the word of God over a lengthy period of time. It finally will so upset them and disturb them in their objection and rebellion to it. It will finally get to them. As Robert Law says, "The serpent's egg was hatched." That's what happens when they leave. So, they reveal their inner disloyalties by their action.

Now John goes on to say, "That they went out, but they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." I'd like to make just a couple of applications here. I'd like to say first of all, that this is not something that refers to the changing of a church. In other words, it's possible for you to be in Believers Chapel, that is, a Christian church affirming the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the atonement only through him. It's possible for you to leave this church and go to another Christian church, and I don't have the right to say to you, "They went out from us because they were not of us, if they had been of us they would have continued with us."

This doesn't apply to places where there are different Christian churches. Course, I might not understand why you would do that, you understand, but that wouldn't mean that John's words had to do with you. And in fact, to be perfectly honest with you, I don't have such a concept of the truth that I know that this is exactly where you should be. The Holy Spirit knows that. And I want to say to you too, that you are always welcome in the Chapel, even if you are not "of us: in the ecclesiastical sense. If you are "of us" as Christians, we rejoice in that and sooner or later we'll all be in a better church anyway than any of our churches.

Notice one other thing, enrollment on the church roll, they didn't have church rolls, you understand. In fact, in the New Testament you didn't have anything like a

church roll. In fact, that's why we don't in Believers Chapel have one, because we couldn't find it in the New Testament, but we don't get mad at other churches that do. But you will notice this, regardless of whether you have a written role or an unwritten role, enrollment on a church roll is not the same as enrollment in the Lamb's Book of Life. There's a difference, amazing, significant, important difference to be in that book. Unfortunately, I cannot read that book. My glasses don't work for that book. One other thing, notice John says, "They went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." In other words, their departure is a divine purposed departure to indicate the truth of matters. They went out. God determined that, that the true believers might be seen to meet the test.

There's a fellow who writes commentaries who has said this, "For the seal which God engraves on their consciousness, by his spirit, cannot be obliterated. The incorruptible seed which has struck root cannot be pulled up or destroyed." He's not speaking here of men's constancy, but of God's constancy, whose election must be confirmed. Wherefore, he has good reason to say that where God's calling is effectual, perseverance will be certain. In short, he means that those who fall away have never been thoroughly imbued with the knowledge of Christ and only had a slight and passing taste of it because when God plants the incorruptible seed of new life through the word of God in the heart of a believer, life inevitably comes and it unalterably stays there forever, associated with the inmost being of that individual. What a marvelous doctrine perseverance of the saints is.

Now finally, he talks about the anointing and the truth in verses 20 and 21, "But ye have an anointing." That word is a word related to the word Christ. Christ means the anointed one, of course, Christos, Jesus the anointed one. Well this is an anointing, a christening in one sense. So, "You have an unction from the Holy One, and ye all know," the Seceders who went out claimed advanced knowledge. They claimed a grade of knowledge that was above the grade of knowledge that the vast majority had. Many of

them were associated, it does seem, with at least gnostic types of individuals. They disparaged the elementary grades of spiritual life, claimed to have the higher grades, and also be able to dispense with them.

C. S. Lewis, in one of his writings, comments on the danger of inner ring; that is individuals who claim to be elitish and have special knowledge of things, and evidently there was just such a group of individuals in the early church. He says, this anointing, this unction is from the Holy One, that's Christ. But what's the anointing? What's the unction? Well putting together all that the Lord said in the upper room, and other parts of the New Testament, it's plain that they had the anointing of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, that which the Lord Jesus had promised. He said, "I will pray the Father he will give you another Comforter, the spirit of truth and he will abide with you forever." That's the unction that comes from the Holy One, the anointing.

Now remember, he was anointed for his ministry as Messiah by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon him at his baptism. So John says, "You have an anointing," "You have an unction coming from Christ," just as he had an anointing of the Holy Spirit that came to him for his Messianic ministry. So John is saying look, these individuals claim to have new light, different light, deeper light, but you have an anointing from the Lord himself, the Holy Spirit of God, and you all know, not some of you, some special group, you all know. Universal knowledge, they have a built in spiritual instinct, a built in spiritual power though the person of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The lies and the truths company together, but through the Holy Spirit, one is able to make the distinguishing perceptions. So we all know, guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth, we do have all of the capacity for knowing divine truth.

Incidentally, if he did say, "You know all things," he would, of course, not be saying we are omniscient. We're not omniscient, but we know all things with reference to his sonship and his messiahship would be the point. But I'd like to say something else here, when he says we have an unction from the Holy One, we have the Holy Spirit, and

by virtue of him, we all know, think of what he's saying, he's saying, as he, the Son of God, carried on his ministry through the unction of the Holy Spirit who, from the Father, guided him in all of his Messianic ministry, we to have an unction from the Holy One. That lets us know how we know spiritual truth.

If you want to know astrological truth, who would want to know that anyway, but it seems to be the in thing today [laughter], with some people who belong to the inner ring [laughter], but at any rate, what you would do if you are going to learn any topic is to go to those who best understand that topic. Isn't that true? If you want to know scientific truth of a particular character, you go to the scientist who best understands that. If it's medical truth, if it's economics, if there is any truth in economics at all, [laughter], you would go to the individual who is an economist and so on. But look, in spiritual things, my Christian friend, you go to God through the Holy Spirit. We have an unction from the Holy One.

In fact, the Lord Jesus, remember, says that we are joint heirs with him. We are sons of God also. In effect, he's saying we are joint Christs. That is, we have an unction. Our unction is the Holy Spirit. We are joint Christs. Now mind you, there is a big difference, we'll put it in a little "c" because we don't know everything, we will never know everything, but we do know. We know him. It's like a little child who knows his parents but doesn't know everything about the parents, thank goodness. [Laughter] But you know them. Look, my father's voice, he's been gone for seventeen years, if I were to hear my father's voice behind this wall, I would know it was my father because I knew him, not everything about him, but I knew him.

So he says, we know God by virtue of the presence of the unction. Look if you want to know spiritual truth, you go to the teacher, the divine pedagogue, the Holy Spirit. Here is the text, and he's well able to guide us into the truth. That's what Jesus, himself, said in the upper room. He will guide you in the spirit of the truth. We don't go to a scientist. We don't go to the professor of Old Testament theology. We don't go to the

professor of New Testament theology. We don't go to the professor of New Testament exegeses, or the Old Testament professor of exegeses, they may say some things that are interesting tests of what we discover by the study of Holy Scripture. We don't abandon them, but we don't pay primary attention to them, we listen to our divine pedagogue, because we have an unction from the Holy One.

This past week I was with Bruce Waltke on Friday morning after the commencement at Westminster Seminary, and we were sitting at the table, and he said, "Do you remember what you told me when I went off to Harvard to study?" Can you imagine someone asking me a question like that? [Laughter] I cannot remember what I said last week, [laughter] much less what I said thirty-five years ago or so, or thirty years ago whatever it was, twenty-five. [Laughter] He said, "You told me, citing Psalm 119, that I should pay attention to the Scriptures because David said, or the Psalmist said, 'I have more understanding than all my teachers because I have made the Scriptures my meditation,'" Psalm 119 verse 99 rendered freely. That's really true, very true.

So what happens when I'm taught by the Lord Jesus, why he just lifts me up, through the Holy Spirit taking of the things that the Lord desires to teach me, taking of the things of Christ, bringing them to me lifting me up so that I am instructed by the Lord Jesus himself, through the Holy Spirit and the things of God. How marvelous that is for believers. How anyone cannot spend time in the Scriptures, in the light of that, is a puzzle no one could ever explain logically. To know God, that's the whole reason we are here. And it's all potentially there as you sit with the word of God before you, and ask the Lord to enlighten you through the unction given to you that you might come to know him better.

Well, I have to close. If you look at it from the negative side, you of course would see the costliness of unbelief, of letting belief go. Think of what those individuals let go, ostensibly. The very consideration of what you might lose should be, as someone

has put it, "a steadying reflection." They went out, and in going out, they abandoned what they had professed of the reality of spiritual truth.

There is a marvelous story. I just read it this week about a Welsh preacher. He was expounding the costly implication of the text that says, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." And so in order to illustrate it, he had a long soliloquy on his wasted life, that is he acted as if his life was a wasted life. He had preached for a long time, but now he was abandoning the truth because there was no God. He was standing in the pulpit so to set the mood of the reluctant laws of faith. He began to remove one by one the pulpit furnishings.

As he did this he talked to himself of the lost values that he didn't count precious anymore. He took the Bible off the top of the pulpit. It was on a cushion. He took it off and put it away down below. And as he did this he murmured over the treasured passages of the word of God that he recalled, and he talked about the conversions of individuals that had supposedly taken place and the crises that the Scriptures had met, the sick bed, marriage, death, and so on. Then he removed the hymn book and he hinted at the thrill of adoring worship, which he no longer had, the buoyant praise, the humbling gratitude, and the tender penitence of its poetry in music. He put away the pulpit cushion next, recalled some of the great sermons that had been preached there, that redirected lives, long life of Christian testimony that that represented.

Then he took the pulpit flowers and he put them away and with them he was talking about the radiance shed on nature by the Father's love, the pulpit chairs with their memories of children saying anniversary pieces and reciting things like the catechism. And finally he stepped down from the pulpit stairs, talking to himself of the years spent in patiently stumbling, but lovingly proclaiming a God that was now disproved. And slowly he walked out and walked down to the end of the auditorium and as he had his hand on the latch of the door to leave, he turned back, everything was just absolutely quiet, he turned back and he said, "Do you want them back?" And according to the story, there

were three thousand people in that auditorium, and they all shouted out immediately, "Yes, ey, yes!" And with that he turned around and came back walked down the aisle, replaced everything that had been put aside then the Bible as he put it on top of the cushion, he opened it and he read, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people saith your God."

What would we lose if we lost the Scriptures, lost the apostolic truth? What a security we have in possessing the Holy One, God's great gift to his own. Some men leave us to become antichrists, or the prey of antichrists. For some leave the company of Christ to become the prey of false teachers. But I cannot, you cannot. The Lord Jesus at a particular point in his ministry John says many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. He turned and said to them, "Will ye also go away?" And Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. We believe that Thou art the Son of God, the Holy One of God." And I want to say to you, as Peter cried out, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Christ's joint christ, Christ's joint sons, Christ's joint heirs want no husks from the swine troughs of the seducers of the saints. We'll never be happy except with the Son of God, as set forth in Holy Scripture, and the triune God so beautifully unfolded in the word of truth.

If you're here today and you've never believed in Christ, you're not "of us." But you may become one of us by personally before the Lord acknowledging your lost condition, you're need of divine grace and the forgiveness of your sins and if within your heart you confess that you're a sinner, and you see that Christ has given himself according to the Scriptures for sinners, dying for the sins of sinners, God offers eternal life, forgiveness of sins, adoption within the family and all of the other blessings of life, and that unction to guide you, then you may today pass from death into life from darkness into his marvelous light. Come to Christ. Trust him right now. Let this be the moment of your conversion.

Let's stand for the benediction.

“The Last Hour and the Doctrinal Test” by S. Lewis Johnson  
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[Prayer] Father, how marvelous it is to be taught of the apostles. We are grateful Lord for the unction from the Holy One. Forgive us Lord for so rarely taking advantage of what we have. Oh God, for all of us, forgive us...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**