

Staying Power

1 John 2:24-29

Introduction

Knowing that we live in an era of antichrists and that even those who have been among us as professing Christians can leave the flock and the faith is sobering. We might well respond the way the disciples of Jesus did when He told them in the upper room that one of them would betray Him. "Is it I, Lord?"

What will keep us from falling away ourselves? *Whether we are looking at a Judas or a Demas or a brother or sister we know personally, what marks those who hold fast to Christ versus those who drift away and in time turn against Christ?*

It is fitting that the apostle John answers this strategic question right after talking about the antichrists of his day. My prayer is that his words will this morning give you resolve and comfort in these last days full of antichrists.

²⁴ Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. **27** But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. **29** If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

Abide/abides (6x)—to remain, to stay
Staying Power—versus defecting with the spirit of antichrist

1. Sure Foundation: Divine Fellowship through God's Word that Abides in You (24-25)
2. Present Protection: Discernment from the Spirit Who Abides in You (26-27)
3. Future Certainty: Expectation for the Coming Christ in Whom You Abide (28-29)

1. Sure Foundation: Divine Fellowship through God's Word that Abides in You (24-25)

24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will

abide in the Son and in the Father. **25** And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

"Still, my soul, be still, do not forsake the truth you learned in the beginning."

"What you heard from the beginning"—the apostolic message versus new teachings like those of the Gnostics

There is continuity to biblical truth. The apostles taught that NT revelation confirmed the OT prophecies. One overriding message to the Bible—the good news that God is calling out a people for His name through Jesus the promised Messiah. *This good news is for all ethnicities and all generations. It is ancient in its origin but it is not time-worn or obsolete in its truth or power.*

The gospel you learned at the beginning does not need upgrade or replacement. Some people teach that Biblical truth is fine for a beginning, but not for growth and advancement. They claim they have grown beyond it. They are lying.

Remember the people in Athens were always enamored with some new thing (Acts 17:21). 2 Timothy 3:7 describes those in the last days who are "always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth."

*Beware wasting your time (your life)
exploring speculations instead of rooting
yourself in firm Biblical truth.*

“Abides in you”—remains, stays in you
Psalm 1—the blessed man—His delight is in
the law of the Lord (rather than the counsel
of the wicked) and on his law he meditates
day and night.

Part of an if-then statement.

Then you will abide in the Son and in the
Father

John 15:3-5

³ Already you are clean because of the word
that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and
I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by
itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can
you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the
vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides
in me and I in him, he it is that bears much
fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:7-11

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in
you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be
done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified,
that you bear much fruit and so prove to be
my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so
have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you
keep my commandments, you will abide in
my love, just as I have kept my Father's
commandments and abide in his

love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

John 16:1

I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.

“This is the promise that he made to us”—again takes us to what God has said; faith in His promises is what gives us hope. His Word connects us to a certain future and guides us every step of the way there.

Beware of those who market their own techniques and philosophies as what you need to advance. They’ve discovered a new secret to spiritual success. You need to read this new book and you’ll be convinced. Practice this formula. Attend this seminar. Beware those who explain away or deny clear Scripture in order to promote a new understanding from what is obscure.

If you let God’s Word abide in you, you will abide in the Father and in the Son. Closeness to God does not come divorced from His Word. How can you be close to any person whose words you ignore, belittle, or deny?

This is His promise—eternal life

His Word declares His gospel—the good news that eternal life is ours in Jesus. Not just length of time but fellowship with God now and forever. Quality and quantity. Some people may consider you a simpleton. But you are an heir of eternal life. Whatever substitute they are peddling is darkness and death.

If you let the Word slip away from your heart, you lose fellowship with the Son and with the Father. And you lose the eternal life God has promised us. Genuine believers refuse to let go of God's Word, God's promise.

What interferes with the Word abiding in you? Busyness. If you're too busy to spend time in the Word, you're too busy. Burn some of those idols, and make room for what matters most.

The Spirit of the age—image-based info with constantly changing visual stimulation. Actually rewiring the brain, making it harder to think logically, so engage in contemplation, to meditate, making you vulnerable to propaganda and mind control. It's like we are entering the Dark Ages again, where reading and reason are unknown. You have to fight the spirit of the age. Lock up your phone and other devices if need be to give space to abiding in God's Word.

Common disdain for Biblical truths today, recasting them with pejorative terms in keeping with the lies of the age coined by

God-haters. Don't fill your mind with their philosophies.

2. Present Protection: Discernment from the Spirit Who Abides in You (26-27)

²⁶ I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷ But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

Once again, John explains why he's writing—there are those trying to deceive the believers

But the anointing you have received abides in you—the Holy Spirit.

You are owner-occupied by the Spirit of God. He makes you holy—you belong to God. He empowers and protects His own.

You have no need that anyone should teach you.

Careful not to tear this statement from its context. Ephesians 4—Christ gives His church teachers—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry so that the whole church body grows in doctrinal and practical Christ-like maturity.

The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts according to His will so that the whole body is benefited by what each gifted member brings to it. We are not lone rangers, but we do not need teaching outside of what the Word and the Spirit provide.

John is talking about those who are bringing new teaching to believers to deceive them. They allege that what we received at the beginning is not enough. They want to go beyond that. They cast doubt on the wisdom of confining oneself to what the Scriptures reveal. They belittle the believers' Spirit-given wisdom and direction. False teaching like this raises alarms in a born-again believer's heart. "Search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so."

2 John 1:9

Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

The teaching of the Spirit is always in line with the Scriptures because the Spirit is the one that brought them into being.

2 Peter 1:20-21

²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever

produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ. These false teachers minimize Him. They are hawking other keys to spiritual success. It's a lie. You won't be better off with new teaching. You won't be wiser or stronger. False teaching deceives—leads you astray—and destroys.

But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth (John 15:26; 16:13). So does 1 John 5:6.

Jeremiah 31:33-34

³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Isaiah 59:21

“And as for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,” says the LORD, “from this time forth and forevermore.”

Walk in the Spirit and you won't fulfill the desires of the flesh.

Practice the presence of God (Puritans)

Fruit of the Spirit—evidence of change from the inside out—proof of being born again

The Spirit of truth tells no lies—objective test, the written Word of God

3. Future Certainty: Expectation for the Coming Christ in Whom You Abide (28-29)

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

Abide in Him—fruitful (John 15)

Confidence—boldness, freedom of speech; used of the apostles boldness to preach the gospel when filled with the Spirit

Not shrink from him in shame—accountability to Jesus

Parable of the talents/pounds—use what Jesus has given you, knowing He will reward you for your faithfulness. We must all give an account of our lives to Him. What am I doing with what He gave me to grow and to advance His kingdom?

When he appears—his manifestation, his bringing to light (shows up again in 3:2, 3:5, and 3:8)

Of the four occurrences, the first two look toward His future appearing; the second two toward His past appearing. Both His first coming and His second calls us to holy living.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:5 He appeared in order to take away sins. Therefore no one who abides in Him keeps on sinning (3:6).

1 John 3:8 He appeared in order to destroy the works of the devil. Therefore if we are born of God we don't make a practice of sinning like the devil does (3:9).

His coming—His *parousia*; used in ancient times of a royal visit; everything in readiness for his coming—rolling out the red carpet

"I will watch and wait for my Savior King."

His return can be at any time. Those who expect Him live in ways they know would please Him were He to suddenly show up.

If we get mired all the temporal concerns of the here and now, we lose sight of why we are on the planet, and we've put out our minds that He is coming back. History is rushing toward this destiny. And we are part of it. Anyone who acts like they'll never have to answer to Christ is playing the fool.

Matthew 24:45-50

⁴⁵ "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁷ Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' ⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know ⁵¹ and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1 John 2:29

If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

His character of righteousness drives our desire to live righteously—in keeping with who He is.

Not just when others are looking
How we behave at home, in business, in the community.

“And when we fail”—we repent.

If we are genuine believers, His life is in us. We are born again. His children. We represent Him. We are outposts of His kingdom, a colony of citizens with heavenly customs of light shining out in a world with the customs of darkness.

We are saved by His grace not by our works. But He saved us unto good works (Ephesians 3:10). Our good works display the reality that He has saved us and that He is at work in us. We don't achieve perfection in this life, but the general character and disposition of our lives is one of righteousness and goodness.

Those who celebrate, condone, or excuse a lifestyle that is contrary to His commands show that they are still in rebellion against Him, not loyal citizens born again by the Holy Spirit.

The King is coming. You belong to Him. Honor Him. Whatever suffering that may mean from those who refuse His reign. Better to lose everything, including life itself, than to lose Him.

Christ: "Will you also turn away?"

Peter: "Where else shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Conclusion

1. Sure Foundation: Divine Fellowship through God's Word that Abides in You (24-25)
2. Present Protection: Discernment from the Spirit Who Abides in You (26-27)
3. Future Certainty: Expectation for the Coming Christ in Whom You Abide (28-29)

The Word, the indwelling Spirit, Christ's Coming—these three shape our lives and guard our hearts from joining the antichrists of the age.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways you have found to let the Word of God—"what you heard from the beginning"—abide in you?
2. What connection have you experienced between time in the Word and a sense of fellowship with God?

3. What are some common replacements advocated today for fellowship with God through His Word?
4. What are some ways you know the Holy Spirit is leading you, influencing you, or changing you? How can you be sure?
5. In what ways does the sure coming of Jesus our Savior-King encourage you in your daily walk?
6. What kind of lifestyle patterns would give a believer confidence the day He returns, and what kind of patterns would make a believer ashamed?
7. How do the Word, the Spirit, and the Second Coming give us staying power in a world full of antichrists?