

Born of God

An Exposition of I John

I John 2:19-24

Scriptures

I John 2:19

Galatians 5:9

Matthew 13:25

Luke 14:33

I John 2:20

I John 2:21

I John 2:22

Acts 2:36

Matthew 16:13-17

Luke 2:11

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John 1:12

Romans 8:9

Galatians 4:6

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Matthew 24:13

Luke 9:62

I John 2:19 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.

THEY went out from us, but they were not [ever] of us.

John's words prove that those who depart from the faith were never really of it.

Apostates can and will remain with true believers for a time, but there will come a time when their false professions of faith become manifest.

Impure motives are not enough to keep men faithful to religion for their entire lives.

Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Even a small amount of religious hypocrisy will affect the growth of a true Christian assembly. Because the Lord allows the departure of those who once called themselves Christians, the influence they once had, or could have had, in the true church of Christ is greatly diminished.

When men depart from Christ, Whom they once professed to follow, they lose their authority to influence those who remain loyal to Him.

To understand apostasy properly, one needs to know three things. First, those who leave the faith were once considered part of the church. They took on the habits of conversion, but they were never truly converted.

Second, God allows their departure so that the pretenders might be fully manifest, removing any confusion as to what true faith really is.

Third, with the exodus of the counterfeits, the body of Christ is better able to grow in the divine qualities of love and spiritual unity.

When schisms are removed, even if they were undetected by many, then harmony and peace are more freely able to flourish.

A long-standing practical military tactic in warfare is to infiltrate the enemy and cause as much internal disruption as possible. Satan does this by planting those with false

motives among those whose hearts are pure toward the Savior. Planting tares (or weeds) along with the wheat is a common devilish practice.

Matthew 13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 13:25

While men slept, his enemy came . . . —That is, “in the night,” when it could be done without being seen, an enemy came and scattered bad seed on the new plowed field, perhaps before the good seed had been harrowed in. . . .

Sowed tares—By “tares” is probably meant a degenerate kind of wheat, or the darnel-grass growing in Palestine. In its growth and form it has a strong resemblance to genuine wheat; but it either produces no grain, or that of a very inferior and hurtful kind. Probably it comes near to what we mean by “chess.” It was extremely difficult to separate it from the genuine wheat, on account of its similarity while growing.

“The tare abounds all over the East, and is a great nuisance to the farmer. It resembles the American “cheat (chess),” but the “head” does not droop like cheat, nor does it branch out like oats. The grain, also, is smaller, and is arranged along the upper part of the stalk, which stands perfectly erect. The “taste” is bitter, and when eaten separately, or even when diffused in ordinary bread, it causes dizziness, and often acts as a violent emetic. Barn-door fowls also become dizzy from eating it. In short, it is a strong soporific poison, and must be carefully winnowed, and picked out of the wheat grain by grain, before grinding, or the flour is not healthy. Even the farmers, who in this country generally “weed” their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other. They would not only mistake good grain for them, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. Both, therefore, must be left to “grow together” until the time of harvest.”—(Thomson) “The Land and the Book,” vol. ii. pp. 111, 112. - Thus, “tares” aptly represented hypocrites in the church. Strongly resembling Christians in their experience, and, in some respects, their lives it is impossible to distinguish them from genuine Christians, nor can they be separated until it is done by the Great Searcher of hearts at the day of judgment. An enemy the devil hath done it. And nowhere has he shown profounder cunning, or done more to adulterate the purity of the gospel.

Men depart from anything because there is someplace more pleasing to them where they wish to go.

However, once departed, there is no place to go but back to the world.

There are but two forms of government with which sinners and saints will choose to align themselves.

The first is the government by which the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), Satan, sets the parameters of how men can live while in it. In this worldly institution, Satan promises much freedom. Not only can men live as they wish, with no judgment, but they are also encouraged to embrace self-will and self-government.

In Satan’s world, self-love and self-will are far more preferable than love for God and subjection to God.

Those who love the world and are willing to depart from the faith for it, ultimately reveal themselves as preferring human government, or the government of self, man, and Satan, over the sovereignty of God. They embrace free will and the right to sin, over divine rule and obedience to God’s commandments.

Thus, when men leave the faith and the body of believers who still practice it, they reveal that they never really possessed true piety at all. That their true hearts never desired to please God, but only self. Though they may have walked among the saved, their love for the world reveals that they were never themselves truly saved.

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Luke 14:33

Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not . . . —Better, that renounceth not. This, then, was the immediate lesson which the company of eager disciples had to learn: to say good-bye to their “all,” whatever that might be. Fishing-nets and hired servants, or great possessions, or ease and safety, or besetting sins, or fancied righteousness—all had to be renounced. The word for “forsake” is that which was afterwards used in the baptismal formula, “I renounce the devil and all his works,” and the same as that which is translated “bidding farewell” in Luke 9:61, Acts 18:18.

This standard of leaving all to follow Christ is the true test of discipleship. This standard is one that Jesus Christ Himself set, and it should not be lowered by men who do not love the divine One enough to keep it.

To be saved by the Son of God, a man must be willing to leave everything for Him. There can be no compromise on this standard truth; to do so cancels out any possible true hope for salvation.

If a man also is not a disciple of the Lord Jesus, he should not assume that Jesus is his Lord.

Again in Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Luke 14:33

1. Every man who becomes a follower of Jesus should calmly and deliberately look at all the consequences of such an act and be prepared to meet them.
2. Men in other things act with prudence and forethought. They do not begin to build without a reasonable prospect of being able to finish. They do not go to war when there is every prospect that they will be defeated.
3. Religion is a work of soberness, of thought, of calm and fixed purpose, and no man can properly enter on it who does not resolve by the grace of God to fulfil all its requirements and make it the business of his life.
4. We are to expect difficulties in religion. It will cost us the mortification of our sins, and a life of self-denial, and a conflict with our lusts, and the enmity and ridicule of the world. Perhaps it may cost us our reputation, or possibly our lives and liberties, and all that is dear to us; but we must cheerfully undertake all this, and be prepared for it all.
5. If we do not deliberately resolve to leave all things, to suffer all things that may be laid on us, and to persevere to the end of our days in the service of Christ, we cannot be his disciples. No man can be a Christian who, when he makes a profession, is resolved after a while to turn back to the world; nor can he be a true Christian if he “expects that he will” turn back. If he comes not with a “full” purpose “always” to be a Christian; if he means not to persevere, by the grace of God, through all hazards, and trials, and temptations; if he is not willing to bear his cross, and meet contempt, and poverty, and pain, and death,

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without turning back, he “cannot” be a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

When men leave the faith and return to the world from which they came, there is no other place to return to other than it, and apostates are more than comfortable with their choice.

However, no one would ever leave the Lord or the company of believers faithful to Him if they realized, like Peter and the other disciples did, that Jesus alone has the words that lead to eternal life. To do so only proves that the enjoyment of sin, and the freedom to live as the flesh desires, far outweighed any true love for either God or the truth.

Practically speaking, every man must either serve his own carnal, fleshly lusts and desires or Jesus Christ. He cannot do both.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I John 2:19

They went out from us—From the church. That is, they had once been professors of the religion of the Saviour, though their apostasy showed that they never had any true piety. John refers to the fact that they had once been in the church, perhaps to remind those to whom he wrote that they knew them well, and could readily appreciate their character. It was a humiliating statement that those who showed themselves to be so utterly opposed to religion had once been members of the Christian church; but this is a statement which we are often compelled to make.

But they were not of us—That is, they did not really belong to us, or were not true Christians. See the notes at Matthew 7:23. This passage proves that these persons, whatever their pretensions and professions may have been, were never sincere Christians. The same remark may be made of all who apostatize from the faith, and become teachers of error. They never were truly converted; never belonged really to the spiritual church of Christ. . . .

But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us—It was suffered or permitted in the providence of God that this should occur, “in order” that it might be seen and known that they were not true Christians, or in order that their real character might be developed. It was desirable that this should be done:

(a) in order that the church might be purified from their influence—compare the notes at John 15:2;

(b) in order that it might not be responsible for their conduct, or reproached on account of it;

(c) in order that their real character might be developed, and they might themselves see that they were not true Christians;

(d) in order that, being seen and known as apostates, their opinions and conduct might have less influence than if they were connected with the church;

(e) in order that they might themselves understand their own true character, and no longer live under the delusive opinion that they were Christians and were safe, but that, seeing themselves in their true light, they might be brought to repentance.

I John 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

In contrast to those who were never true followers of Christ and who departed from the fellowship of the godly, Christians are those who have the anointing of the Holy

Spirit as a gift from God. This anointing imparts spiritual wisdom, knowledge, and discernment to its recipients.

For men to be destroyed, they must first be deceived, and God's Holy Spirit provides discernment in this critical area, drawing distinctions between the Spirit of truth and the spirits of error only masquerading as It. This holy, spiritual wisdom and internal discernment, whose source is the Holy Spirit, allows saints to know the true nature of Christ's religion. This divinely imparted spiritual knowledge not only makes God known but also the ability to recognize where God's true Spirit abides and where It does not. The reason for this is, because the road to hell will often appear like a path that leads to enlightenment. By then being taught of God, Satan's power to deceive is greatly reduced, and can even be eradicated.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 2:20

Those anointed of God in Christ alone can resist those anointed with the spirit of Satan, Antichrists, who would sever them from the Father and from the Son. Believers have the anointing Spirit from the Father also, as well as from the Son; even as the Son is anointed therewith by the Father. Hence the Spirit is the token that we are in the Father and in the Son; without it a man is none of Christ. The material unguent of costliest ingredients, poured on the head of priests and kings, typified this spiritual unguent, derived from Christ, the Head, to us, His members. We can have no share in Him as Jesus, except we become truly Christians, and so be in Him as Christ, anointed with that unction from the Holy One. The Spirit poured on Christ, the Head, is by Him diffused through all the members.

I John 2:21 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.

The apostle understood that the people whom he was writing to knew the truth. Because of the Holy Spirit's anointing, they could discern error and lies, and any falsehoods meant to deceive them.

By learning what true holiness consists of, the deceptive ploys of false religion, impersonating itself as being sent from God, could be detected and ultimately avoided.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:21

Error often appears plausible. It seems to be adapted to relieve the mind of many difficulties which perplex and embarrass it on the subject of religion. It seems to be adapted to promote religion. It seems to make those who embrace it happy, and for a time they apparently enjoy religion. But John says that however plausible all this may be, however much it may seem to prove that the doctrines thus embraced are of God, it is a great and vital maxim that no error can have its foundation in truth, and, of course, that it must be worthless.

I John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Denieth that Jesus is the Christ.

The word for *Christ* is #5547 *Christos*. *Strong's Concordance* defines this word as the "Anointed One; the Messiah, the Christ."

From this, we can see that to deny Christ is to deny the Messiah—the One anointed and chosen by God to bring peace to the nations, freedom to the captives, and save people from both sin and Satan's rule; the Messiah also, Who would instruct men in a true knowledge of God.

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To truly recognize Christ as Messiah, we must come to yield to His authority, and believe in His divinity.

His authority stems from the fact that He is God's promised One. His divinity resides in the reality that He is God's only-begotten Son, proven by His resurrection from the dead.

It is therefore not merely enough to know Jesus as a good man who walked the earth, and performed good while on it. This is insufficient for salvation. Since to be saved by God, one must believe in and submit to the power, authority, and supremacy of the One God titles both Lord and Christ.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Acts 2:36
this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified—"The sting is at the close" [Bengel]. To prove to them merely that Jesus was the Messiah might have left them all unchanged in heart. But to convince them that He whom they had crucified had been by the right hand of God exalted, and constituted the "Lord" whom David in spirit adored, to whom every knee shall bow, and the Christ of God, was to bring them to "look on Him whom they had pierced and mourn for Him."

He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

When men deny the Son and His authority over their lives, they must simultaneously deny the Father. The Father and Son are one; thus, to reject One is to reject the Other. There is no ambiguity on this point, nor any reputable argument that can debate it, since no bond is more important in Christianity than that which exists between the Father and the Son.

If men reject the Son of God, they reject the very One sent by God to reveal Himself to the world. If done, all true light of God will be lost, and men will forever remain estranged from God.

Recognizing Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, is critical in order to gain salvation from Him. It was this belief that led Peter to become one of Jesus' disciples.

Matthew 16:13-17 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Peter's recognition of Jesus as *the Christ, the Son of the living God*, reveals that he knew the true divinity and authority given to the Son.

The titles *Christ* and *Lord*, in defining Jesus, cannot be separated, and Scripture commonly uses them together to emphasize His present exalted position in both heaven and earth.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

I John 2:23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.

To deny the Son is to deny His authority over your life. This denial means to refuse to submit to His Word, or follow His person, and reject His Spirit.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:23

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father—That is, has no just views of the Father, and has no evidence of his friendship. It is only by the Son of God that the Father is made known to people, Matthew 11:27; Hebrews 1:2–3, and it is only through him that we can become reconciled to God, and obtain evidence of His favor.

He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

Acknowledging the true identity of Jesus Christ, and receiving Him as Lord, opens the door to be made sons of God, through Him.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Ultimately, it is the Son of God Who provides both the power and ability, to be brought into the family of God. It is through Him that new sons of God are created, and without Him, no true fellowship with God can be attained.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 1:12

1. That to be a child of God is a privilege—far more so than to be the child of any human being, though in the highest degree rich, or learned, or honored. Christians are therefore more honored than any other persons.

2. God gave them this privilege. It is not by their own works or desires; it is because God chose to impart this blessing to them, Ephesians 2:8; John 15:16.

3. This favor is given only to those who believe on him.

When men are born again through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, this act makes men fit for heaven through becoming children of God.

Ultimately, God is only the Father of those in whom His own nature dwells, and is not the legitimate Father of any who lack receiving His own divine and spiritual nature.

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

He that acknowledgeth the Son. And is baptized by Him, has been given the Spirit of God, confirming his adoption into the family of God. It is therefore by being given the Spirit of God, that proves spiritual sonship.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Gal. 4:6

And because ye are sons—As a consequence of your being adopted into the family of God, and being regarded as his sons. It follows as a part of his purpose of adoption that his

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children shall have the spirit of the Lord Jesus.

I John 2:24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

Once a man has been made a son of God, he must remain loyal to his calling in order to maintain both fellowship and relationship with the Father and Son. He must continue to abide in Christ, to remain in union with both the Son and the Father.

In no place does Scripture allow for unfaithfulness after conversion. He, therefore, who has been made a child of God through belief in Christ, must continue to believe and obey both Christ's words and the promptings of the Holy Spirit produced from within him. It is by continuing unto the end, that salvation is solidified.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, Matt. 24:13

It is a promise to perseverance, especially to such perseverance as is joined with fortitude. He that shall not be tempted to apostasy through the afflictions of the gospel, but shall patiently and courageously endure all the sufferings which shall follow the profession of the gospel, shall be saved; if not preserved, and so saved with a temporal salvation, yet he shall be eternally saved.

God provides no second renewal or regeneration to any who walk away from the Holy Spirit and return to their previous course of living (Heb. 6:4-6).

Thus, the phrase, "Once a Christian, always a Christian," cannot be true if a man abandons Christ's words and Christ's authority over his life.

To make Jesus Christ Lord is to make Him the ultimate authority over your life forever.

Consequently, to reject His divine rule at any time, or in any manner, can result in forfeiting the salvation He offers.

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Once then faith has begun in the Son of God, it must be continued in, until either physical death overtakes us, or spiritual transformation is given to us. To look back once called by Christ, is to forfeit ultimately being chosen by Him.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Luke 9:62

No man, &c.—As ploughing requires an eye intent on the furrow to be made, and is marred the instant one turns about, so will they come short of salvation who prosecute the work of God with a distracted attention, a divided heart. Though the reference seems chiefly to ministers, the application is general. The expression "looking back" has a manifest reference to "Lot's wife" (Ge 19:26; and see on [1621]Lu 17:32). It is not actual return to the world, but a reluctance to break with it.