

- Modern tendency to ignore doctrine, or claim that “Doctrine Divides”
- John states that right belief is 3rd hallmark of the genuine Christian
- Links in to section on love – no contradiction

Four Characteristics of False Teaching

- ‘Last days’ = whole time from Christ to his return (Acts 2:17, Heb 1:2)
- 1. It arises within and masquerades as genuine Christianity v18,19**
 - ‘Antichrist’ means both ‘against Christ’ & ‘standing in the place of Christ’
 - Its is not brazen evil, but clever and convincing counterfeits
 - Don’t accept every claim of Christianity
 - 2. It breaks fellowship with genuine believers v19**
 - False teaching can’t co-exist with strong biblical teaching
 - Not talking about different denominations – there can be deep fellowship because we believe in the same primary truths.
 - Watch for those who claim that unless you belong to their group/hold their views you are not saved.
 - 3. It has an elitist approach to knowledge v20-27**
 - False teachers appear to be claiming a special anointing from God that reveals deep truths (v20, 27)
 - All true Christians have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit v20,27
 - v27 doesn’t do away with teachers! It means that there is no monopoly on knowledge. You can learn from scripture just as easily as a pastor can.
 - 4. It denies the identity or completed work of Christ v22**
 - John uses ‘Messiah’ as short-hand for the Son of God (v23), the physical reality of God appearing (4:15), and his atoning death (5:6-8, 2:1-2)
 - False teachers teach that you need something only they offer for salvation
 - John calls them ‘liars’ and ‘antichrists’ – opposing Christ by putting themselves in his place.

Four defences against False Teaching

- 1. Abide in the Jesus of the Apostles v24,27**
 - The only Jesus who saves is he Jesus of scripture
 - Jesus has done all that is necessary for salvation – 2:1-2. We need to trust in him and him alone.
- 2. Stay in fellowship with other truth holding Christians v19**
 - Very serious to leave a church unless it has departed from the truth
 - Fellowship is part of God’s protection mechanism
 - But compare everything with scripture

3. Get into and stay in God’s word v20-24

- ‘Heard from the beginning’ = Scripture. ‘Remain’ = abide in, live in
- The surest defence is to soak yourself in scripture
- Are you making a serious and sustained attempt to know the Bible?
- Are you making a serious and sustained attempt to understanding the major doctrines?

4. Rely on the Holy Spirit v21, 27

- Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17) sent to lead us into all truth (Jn 16:13)
- Ask for his guidance every time you read (Ps 119:18)
- Compare Spirit-given scripture with Spirit-given scripture – insight will always agree with other scripture in their context
- Obey all the Spirit teaches you – remain in him

v28 – These four strands will give us a security and a confidence to face the return of Christ.

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