

Schism

Tradition Story

Division

Johaninne Community in crisis

John/The elder addresses a sore point at this time

There has been a Schism

There was disagreement on who Jesus is:

Son of God and Messiah

Or just another human being

After a while a number of people have left the communities

And the Johannine community is still reeling from this event

?? It may be the main reason why the Elder/John wrote the epistle

Previously the tone of the letter centered on encouraging the congregation

Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah

forgiveness of sins

love one another

do not love the world

Suddenly it changes in tone and becomes harsh

You could wonder: where is the love one another?

"They went out of us, but did not really belong to us

△ v19

The Elder/John brands these people as antichrists

And in between the lines he makes these people out as liars

△ v22

Warning not to listen to them but to listen to the truth

Do not engage with them at all!

Core Doctrine of the Church!

This, because there is so much at stake

The core principles of what it means to be a Christian

is the identity of Jesus Christ

And nothing can come in between

What was the heresy?

The people who left proclaimed that

Jesus Christ was not the Son of God

Jesus Christ was not the Messiah

What did they proclaim exactly?

Unsure, but it could be

1. Jesus was a normal human being - not the Son of God

2. Or Jesus never became a human being - but was a spiritual being (before or after his resurrection)

See John 1:1-4

Where John attests that Jesus was a real human

What is then the truth

1. Jesus is the Christ (Messiah)

△ v22b

2. Jesus is Son of God the Father

△ v22c

3. Jesus Christ does not depart from God the Father

△ v22c

Antichrist (Context)

John uses the term Antichrists for them

What are these then?

Much has been made of the term Antichrist in biblical teaching, and in literature and even movies

We can paint them very darkly

Agents of Satan

The false Messiahs that Jesus himself refers to

The Lawless One or Man of Sin

△ 2 Thess 2:3-9

The abomination that makes desolate

△ Mark 13:14 referring to Daniel 9:27;11:21;12:11;

But these seem to come from outside the Christian community -> external threats

But the people that John referred to were part of the community and left on their own accord

They went out of us

△ v19a

Their going showed that that none belonged to us

△ v19b

Also the term Antichrist is only mentioned

In this passage, in detail

And in passing, referring back to this passage in

1 John 4:3

2 John 7

The term itself speaks to imagination

But we do not need to get carried away

How does John/The Elder then define the term?

Antichrists

1. Those who deny Jesus is the Christ (Human)

The Messiah is always prophesied in the OT as a fellow human being - who would rescue Israel

Often called the Son of Man

2. Those who deny that Jesus is God Son (Divine)

As we have learned for John 1: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God

=> Jesus is both human and divine

Son of Man and Son of God

Only then does his sacrifice have the full meaning to reconcile humanity to God

3. Those who were in the Johannine Community

They did not come from outside

They were not strangers

They were loved ones

Brothers, Sisters

Fathers, Mothers

Friends and Family

Who accepted Jesus first and then rejected him

Therefore very tempting to make peace it

To run after

To heal the wounds

Or to be led astray

△ v26

I think the latter is critical

It is not an external threat

But a threat and division coming from within

Maybe that is why John warns that this is the last hour!

As now the community is being divided from within

This must be the end of the times

Heresies

The early church was struggling with heresies

Is Jesus the Son of God and the Son of Man at the same time?

Is the Holy Spirit also divine?

How can God appear to us in three different ways and still be the one true God

Trinity

The church from the 15C onwards was also struggling with interpretations and practice

The reformation

And smaller reforms have resulted in many denominations

Church of England

Catholic Church

Baptist, Methodists and URC

Pentecostal churches

But none of these question the foundations of Christian Faith

Jesus Christ is the Messiah

He is the Son of God

Divine and Human at the same time

Jesus is one of the Trinity

And as such God - Three in one and One in three

We have disagreements, but not of these foundational things

When they do happen we do not recognise them as Christian

Jehova Witnesses

Mormons

The challenge is to remain the one true church worshipping the one true God

Even if we have minor differences

And think that they are very important

Anointing

The Elder/John continues with one more exhortation

you have an anointing of the Holy One, and all of you know the truth

△ v20

I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do

△ v21

Hold on to what you heard from the beginning so that you remain in the Son and the Father

△ v24

God remains in you and you in him

The anointing you received from him remains in you

△ v27

His anointing teaches us about all things

His anointing is real, not counterfeit

and remain in him

Anointing = Holy Spirit?

It seems that those who left do not have this anointing

If they did they would know the basic truths of Jesus

And the Elders is sure of their anointing and what they believe

The anointing also is tied up with the concept of

God remaining in them

They remaining in God

Gospel of John:

Remain in me (The vine and the Branches)

Comes after Jesus promises the Holy Spirit

It is through the Spirit that Jesus comes to his disciples

It is the Spirit that enables us to remain in Jesus

It is the Spirit that enables us to discern the truth and the lies

Are you ready?

This brings me back full circle to our beginning theme

Are you ready?

Not only mentally prepared for what God will do and will ask

But are you also ready in that you received from Jesus what he has promised you?

The Holy Spirit?

Not only does the Holy Spirit equip us for mission

The Holy Spirit enables to remain in him

And by his remaining in us we can discern the truth and the lies

He helps us to remain in Jesus

Without the Holy Spirit and us remaining in Jesus, as we have seen from this passage, the church will eventually break up in dissention

The Holy Spirit unites us

He unites us to God

He unites us to each other

He leads us in truth

and he gives us power for mission

He is the essential ingredient for each Christian

But he not in you by default

You need to be willing to receive him in you

Are you willing?

Are you ready?

Praying for the Holy Spirit?