

# WEEKEND 15/16 October 2022 "Someday!!"

## (1 John 2:18)

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

*How long ago was it that you thought of yourself as a 'child'?* What was your childhood like? Where did you grow up as a child? Who were your parents, your grandparents, your siblings? What phrases would you use to describe your family? *And what about TIME for you and your family?* Did you consider TIME a valuable commodity and did you seek to use it wisely, or as you reflect on your life, do you see quite a bit of wasted time? Right now, as you look at your calendar, are there some really important events coming up for you that you'll make every effort to be prepared for? These are topics we'll see today as we continue our journey with the apostle John, who is writing the first of his letters, which we find near the end of our New Testament.

We don't know exactly when John wrote this letter but he's addressing a profound series of questions that have troubled millions of people since the days of Jesus. Those questions can be summarized with this question: *How can I be sure I am truly 'born again' by God, saved from my sin, and heading for heaven when I die?'*

John has picked up his stylus again and he's writing his second chapter, verse 18... ***"Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour."*** (1 John 2:18) It's only one verse but oh my do you see all that John includes in this one verse?

I notice John uses the little phrase ***"dear children"*** often in this letter. Do you wonder why? It's safe to assume this is not a family letter which John is writing to his biological children. We don't even know if John was ever married. We do know John became a tender, compassionate man through the work of the Holy Spirit in his life, and John used the word ***"love"*** more than any other writer in the Bible. It seems many Christians in the first century felt drawn to John's tenderness and we remember Jesus had entrusted His mother Mary to John's care as they stood at the cross together watching Jesus die. (John 19:26)

I think John, perhaps in his old age, like many tender, older men, viewed all Christians as 'his children' whom he had the privilege and responsibility to love on behalf of Jesus and teach what he had learned from Jesus. I think John's frequent use of that word ***"children"*** in his letter is John's attempt to draw his readers close to him with affection as a large family, the people of God, but also John was reminding them that he had written in his account of Jesus life, the Gospel of John, this powerful statement: ***"Jesus was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. Jesus came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him."***

***Yet to all people who received Him, to those who believed in His name, Jesus gave them the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*** (John 1:10-13)

May I ask, my friends, do you feel like a 'child of God'? Do you understand how much God loves you? *The cross of Jesus Christ stands as the ultimate expression of God's love for you, me and the entire human race. Have you trusted fully in Jesus Christ to be your Savior and are you living in the wonderful Father-child relationship God offers you?*

Now did you notice John's mention of TIME when he wrote ***"this is the last hour..."***? Do you wonder what John meant? Do you remember Jesus had promised His disciples that He would be leaving them, but also, He'd be returning to them? He had said this in the upper room the night before His crucifixion (John 14:28) and of course His death separated Jesus from them, but His resurrection reunited them again! *But Jesus was also speaking about a future time when He would return to earth to gather up all His followers.* The angels, who appeared as Jesus ascended into heaven, reaffirmed this concept by saying: ***"This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."*** (Acts 1:11) As a result, Christians in the first century were on the lookout... they were hoping Jesus would return again in their lifetime! John's use of that phrase ***'this is the last hour'*** energized their hope.

But Jesus did not return in their lifetime, and now, 2000 years later, it would be easy for us to say, *'they sure were wrong about that!'* *But my friends, the exact timing of the return of Jesus Christ to earth is the privilege of Almighty God Himself.* Once when the disciples were pressing Jesus to give them more details so they could pinpoint a more precise projection of Jesus' return, Jesus amazed them by saying: ***"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*** (Matt. 24:36) So several of the Bible authors use phrases such as ***"the last hour"*** or ***"the last days"*** to indicate that each day we are one day closer to the return of Jesus. *But that exact day is known only to God the Father, and therefore God's invitation and challenge to us is that we live each day as though it MAY be the last day before the imminent return of Jesus!* (Titus 2:12,13) If you and I did that, what difference would it make in how we live?

Many Bible scholars refer to the time from the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus until the time of His return as the ***'age of Grace'***, because during these years God's saving grace is available to save from sin condemnation ANY person who repents of their sin and trusts the atonement death of Jesus to be sufficient for God to forgive their sin and save them. Only God knows how long this 'age of Grace' will be, but one thing is for sure... *Jesus is returning again, to gather up all God's people who are alive at that time, and to initiate a glorious resurrection for the bodies of all those who have died with their trust in Jesus as their Savior.* The apostle Paul gives us great detail about this in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15.

Did you notice there's another major topic John mentions in this one verse, 1 John 2:18? I'm sure it grabbed your attention when John wrote: **"...you have heard that the antichrist is coming, and even now many antichrists have come."** I wonder what you think John is talking about here. Because this is such a big topic, we'll save it till Monday, but I promise we'll come right back here and dig deeply into this matter of the **'antichrist'**! For this weekend I suggest we ponder the two challenges John has given us in only a few words... this matter of being confident you are a child of God, and the reality that you and I are living in the **'last hour'** before Jesus returns to us!

*I think God would be pleased if we'd spend some time thanking Him this weekend for both those powerful truths, which are glorious truths... IF you are a genuine Christian!* Are you excited about these truths and are you confident they are both true for you? Now think about that my friends and I'll meet you back here on Monday, and here's a song to help us celebrate these wonderful truths!

**Today's Scripture is 1 John 2:18.**