

**1 John**  
**It Matters What You Believe (Part 2)**  
**1 John 2:18-27**  
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It was on June 2 in the year 1953, that Elizabeth became Queen of England. She was only twenty-five years old at the time. BBC author, Mark Easton, writes about the coronation ceremony; this is what he writes:

The committee convened to organize the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth, II, took a full year to finalize the details. One key question was whether the ceremony should be televised. The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was reportedly horrified at the idea that, “Modern mechanical arrangements, (television cameras) should be used to broadcast from inside Westminster Abbey.” But the Queen and her advisors decided that cameras should be allowed to relay every moment of the meticulously planned ceremony with one exception.

That exception, he says, “was the act of Coronation.” Listen to what Easton writes:

The act of Coronation is so extraordinary that history and the 1953 Coronation Committee decreed that it must remain out of sight. (So, what went on in that secret moment that wasn't televised? He goes on to say.) In preparation for that moment, the Queen was disrobed of her crimson cloak, her jewelry was removed, and the young Elizabeth was seated in King Edward's chair, an ancient and simple throne (which by the way, was built in 1296 A.D.). She was clothed in a dress of purest white; it was a moment of high theater. From the flask, the archbishop poured some blessed oil of orange, roses, cinnamon, musk, and ambergris, and anointed the queen in the form of a cross on the palms of her hand, on the breasts, and on the crown of her head. And as he

did so, he whispered these words: “Be thy head, anointed with holy oil, as kings, priests and prophets were anointed. And as Solomon was anointed king by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, so be you anointed, blessed, and consecrated Queen over the peoples, whom the Lord thy God has given thee to rule and to govern (The article finishes this way.). As a newsreel commentator, put it, (The hallowing-that's that act of consecration I just shared with you.) The hallowing is a moment so old history can barely go deep enough to contain it.”

It truly was an extraordinary moment, that moment in which the act of Consecration was performed for Elizabeth, II.

But the amazing reality, Christian, is that if you truly know the Lord, if you have repented and believed in Jesus Christ, you have also been anointed. And your anointing was far more solemn and more grand than that of Elizabeth, and its results far more profound and far reaching. We learn about that anointing that you have received in the next passage that we come to in our study of 1 John.

So far, we have studied the “Moral Test” to see whether, or not, you have eternal life; do you live in obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word? We’ve looked at the “Social Test;” do you have a love for God and His people? And we're now considering the “Doctrinal Test;” do you have faith in Jesus Christ, and in His Gospel? Let's read this section together; it begins in first John 2, verse 18, and I'll read down through verse 27. You follow along:

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went

out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

If we summarize this paragraph that I've just read, we would put it this way, "A True Christian Always Knows, Believes, and Perseveres in The Biblically Orthodox Teaching about Jesus Christ and His Gospel." What we're learning here, as I've shared with you, is just as there are vital signs that showed the presence of physical life, in the same way, there are also doctrinal, vital signs that show the presence of spiritual life; not only obedience and love, but you have to believe the right things, and that belief is shown by certain vital signs.

The last time we studied this passage together, we examined the first vital sign that's part of the doctrinal test in verses 18 and 19. This is the test, "Do You Belong to a Biblical Church?" Do you belong to a biblical church? He talks about the fact that, in the churches in Asia Minor, there were those who were a part of the church, true biblical churches, overseen by the Apostle John, who left with the false teachers and, by their leaving, showed that they had never truly been Christians at all. Because a true Christian doesn't abandon a biblically Orthodox church for a false church; it doesn't happen.

Now today, we come to the second doctrinal vital sign of spiritual life, and it's absolutely essential; "Do You Believe the Essential Gospel?" Do you believe the essential gospel? This is the message of verses 20 to 25. We're not **going to** get through all of those verses today; we're just **going to** begin. But this is crucial, "Do You Believe the Essential Gospel?"

The main point of these verses is that because of something John the Apostle calls, "The Anointing," because of that anointing, "A True Christian Knows, Believes, and Perseveres in the Essential Elements of Saving Truth." He knows, he believes, and he continues believing the essential elements of saving truth. That's the message of verses 20 and 21. Look at them again with me. "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth."

Now admittedly, those verses are not as clear as some others we've considered. But they are clear once you really delve into them and consider them. And so, I want to help us understand

what's being taught here by letting John answer the questions that I think come to all of our minds as we look at those verses. There are several questions here he answers about this mysterious 'anointing' that keeps us on the right path with the essential gospel. So, let's look at the questions.

Question number one, "Who Has this 'Anointing?'" who has this anointing? Verse 20, "But you have an anointing from the Holy One." Now in the Greek text, the pronoun 'you' is plural; in English, we have 'you' and it means 'you singular' and it means 'you plural,' and you discern from context which is which. But Greek has a plural pronoun for 'you;' that's the one that's used here. So, he's talking about all of those to whom he writes. Also in the Greek text, you can position the pronoun and use the pronoun in a way that makes it emphatic; he does that here.

So, read it in conjunction with verse 19. He says in verse 19, there were those who left the church, but you in contrast to those who left in verse 19. John is writing his letter, as we've made note, to several churches in Asia Minor that he Shepherded and oversaw, and the believers in those churches would have been of many different spiritual ages. Undoubtedly, some of them had been saved under John's ministry in the 70's, 80's, and 90's A.D., as he served there in Asia Minor. But some of them were saved under the ministry of the Apostle Paul in the 50's and 60's A.D. And probably some of them had even been saved at Pentecost back in the 30's. They're mentioned, this region is mentioned there in Acts 2, those who were present and who came to trust in Jesus Christ. John directs these verses at them all, regardless of their spiritual ages. That means 'you' here must refer to all genuine believers. So, whatever this anointing is, it's something that all true believers, then and now, without exception, possess. If you're here

this morning and you are truly a Christian, if you've repented and believed in Jesus Christ, then you have this anointing.

So, that brings us to the second and key question, “What Exactly Is the Anointing?” What is this anointing that you've received if you're a follower of Jesus Christ? Notice verse 20, “But you have an anointing.” The Greek word for ‘anointing’ is *‘chrisma.’* It’s used only here in the New Testament, three times in this passage, once in verse 20, and twice in verse 27. The Greek word doesn't focus on the act of anointing, but rather on the substance that the anointing is performed with. Now, that's absolutely crucial.

In Scripture, the substance that was used for anointing was what? Oil, olive oil, typically is a base with spices added, fragrance and spices added, just like the one that was used for the anointing of Queen Elizabeth, II. And so, usually it was oil and in both the Old Testament in the New Testament, anointing with oil symbolized that someone had been set apart for a specific role, and they had been empowered to fulfill that role. Priests were anointed, Exodus 40; kings were anointed, as David was in 1 Samuel 16:13; prophets were anointed, 1 Kings 19:16.

But we learn the most about this concept of anointing from the New Testament and, specifically, from our Lord. You remember our Lord's earthly name was Jesus, a name given to Him by the angel, Gabriel, ultimately by the Lord through the angel, Gabriel, the name Jesus. But we refer to Him, the New Testament refers to Him as Jesus Christ. What is Christ? Christ is not Jesus's name; it's His title, Jesus Christ.

Now, in Hebrew, that's 'Hamashiach.' It means it is the Messiah; that's how we would transliterate it into English. And in Greek, it's 'Christos;' they mean exactly the same thing; both 'Hamashiach,' or the Messiah, and 'Christos,' both literally mean 'The Anointed One.' Jesus was the Lord's anointed. He is, after all, remember, our Prophet, Priest, and King, and so it was right that He be anointed.

But Jesus, you won't find any record anywhere in the New Testament that He was anointed with oil for His role as Messiah. Instead, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, with the Holy Spirit. This was prophesied about Him back in Isaiah 61:1, we read:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
Because the LORD has anointed me  
To bring good news to the afflicted;  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to captives  
And freedom to prisoners.

In Acts 4, verse 27, as the early church prays, they say, "...in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel."

But Peter, in Acts 10:38, makes it very clear what this anointing was. He's talking to Cornelius and the friends who had gathered with Cornelius at his home, and he says this, "You know of

Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit.” That's how Jesus was anointed. He is God's anointed, the Chosen One, and that choice was marked out, not because He was anointed with oil, but because He was anointed with the Holy Spirit.

When did that happen? Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism. Luke 3:22, “...the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came (up) out of heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.’” John 1:32, John said, “...I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven (And listen to this.) and (the Spirit) remained on Him.” In John 3:34, we read, “...He whom God has sent (meaning Jesus) speaks the words of God; (Listen to this.) for He (the Father) gives (the Son) the Spirit without measure.” The Father anointed Jesus with the Spirit, and He gave Him the Spirit without limits. He's the only one the world has ever seen who had the power of the Spirit resting on Him in a way without limits. So, Jesus, as the perfect Prophet, Priest, and King, was anointed, not with oil, but with the Holy Spirit.

You say, “How does that apply specifically to us?” Well listen carefully, as believers, according to 1 Peter 2:9, we are “a royal priesthood;” that is, we are kings and priests. And like our Lord, we too have been anointed. In fact, did you know that's the meaning of the name ‘Christian?’ You're called a ‘Christian.’ What does that mean? You're a little ‘*christos*,’ you're a ‘little anointed one,’ a little anointed one.

When did that happen? Well, the first time this happened was at Pentecost. In Acts, chapter 2, we learned that all of those who had come to believe in Jesus up to that time, were anointed with



the Holy Spirit. But starting from that time, after the Spirit came at Pentecost, from that time on, it was at salvation, that every believer is anointed with the Holy Spirit. God gives us the Holy Spirit to indwell us.

Turn to 2 Corinthians, chapter 1. Paul says in verses 19 and 20, that all of God's promises are "Amen in Jesus;" that is, they are confirmed, they're established, they're accomplished in Jesus Christ. And then he says this in verse 21, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and (the one who) anointed us is God." Now at first glance, you might think, "Well, maybe Paul's just talking about himself, and maybe the Apostles, but verse 22 makes it clear he's talking about more because he says, "...who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge." He's talking about all believers. Believer, you have been anointed by God with His Holy Spirit. It happened at the moment of your salvation. I wish I had time to unpack this text.

There are four word-pictures here in verses 21 and 22. One is that you have been established; the picture is of laying a foundation; God has set a foundation in your life, you're stable in Christ. And then he uses the picture of this "anointing" we're looking at. And then in verse 22, of being "sealed" like a ring, a signet ring, imprinted in wax marking ownership. You are owned by, you belong to God, and He "gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge." The word pledge is like a down payment on a future inheritance. You've gotten the first installment of the inheritance that's yours and that's made evident and clear to you, guaranteed to you, by the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

So, back in 1 John then, the anointing, don't miss this, the anointing that every believer has received, that you have received, the anointing is the Holy Spirit that you received at the moment of your salvation. By the way, down in verse 27 of our text, notice “the anointing teaches us.” (Paraphrase.) That clearly implies that the anointing is a person. Look over in chapter 4, verse 13, “By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” Christian, like your Lord, you have been anointed with the Holy Spirit, He indwells you, you are marked, stamped, by the Spirit of God.

That brings us to a third question and that is, what is the source, “What Is the Source of Our Anointing?” Verse 20, “...you have an anointing from the Holy One,” from the Holy One. Now in the Old Testament, the Father is called “The Holy One of Israel,” Isaiah 1:4; chapter 5, verse 19; chapter 5, verse 24, and so forth. But our Lord is also often called “The Holy One;” Mark 1:24, “...the Holy One of God!” John 6:69, “We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.” In Acts 3:14, Peter says, “...you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you.”

So, here when he says. “it's from the Holy One, it could mean from the Father, could mean from the Son. And it's interesting, Scripture associates both the Father and the Son with the sending of the Spirit and with the identity of the Spirit. It's interesting in Romans 8, verse 9, Paul calls the Holy Spirit, “The Spirit of God,” and in the very same verse, he calls the Holy Spirit, “The Spirit of Christ.” In Acts 16:7, the Holy Spirit is called “The Spirit of Jesus.”

When you step back and look at it further in terms of the sending of the Spirit, we learn that the Father promised and sent the Spirit. John 14:26, "...the Father will send (the Holy Spirit) in my name." Luke 24:49, Jesus calls the Spirit, "...the promise of My Father." Galatians 4:6, "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" So, the Father sent the Spirit. But the Son also sent the Spirit, John 15:26. He says, "When the Helper comes (This is Jesus. When the Helper comes,) whom I will send to you from the Father." Luke 24:49, Jesus says, "...behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you."

You say, "Well, which is true?" The answer is both. And Acts 2:33 explains how they interrelate. Listen carefully. This is Acts 2:33, this is Peter, talking about Jesus, and he says, "(Jesus) ...having been exalted to the right hand of God, and (Jesus) having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, (Jesus) has poured forth this which you both see and hear." You see how they blend together? In the language of the creeds, "The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son." And here's another way to say it, listen carefully, "The Spirit is sent by the Father through the Son."

Now, which is meant in our text then; who's the Holy One that's the source of the Holy Spirit, our anointing? In context, it seems pretty certain that from "the Holy One" here, John means Jesus, specifically, because he states it the same way down in verses 27 and 28. And we'll see when we get there, the pronouns are referring to Jesus as the source. So, let me summarize the answer to question three, what's the source of our anointing? Every Christian has been anointed with the Spirit, from the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Question number four, “When Did We Receive Our Anointing?” when did you get this anointing? Verse 20 says, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One.” Literally, it's present tense in the Greek text, “You are having an anointing.” In other words, all Christians received this anointing in the past, and it continues today. In fact, look down at verse 27, this is really key. He says, “As for you, the anointing which you received (past tense) from Him.” That's at salvation; “...the anointing...you received from Him abides in you.” In other words, it continues. So, it's both something that happened at salvation, and that anointing continues to have an impact on your life, the Spirit in this role.

So, let's look at both. Let's go back to that, “You received from Him at salvation.” What is this? When did you receive this anointing? You received it at salvation, and at salvation, listen carefully, and I'm going to use a theological term, I'll define it in a moment, at salvation, in regeneration, we received the “anointing” and the anointing is nothing else but the Holy Spirit. So, in the moment of new birth, that's regeneration, when God gave **to** you, life, at the moment of salvation, you received this “anointing” which is the Holy Spirit.

This is what was promised in the New Covenant promises even in the Old Testament. Go back to Ezekiel 36, here God gives us the New Covenant. And let me just say that while there are aspects of the New Covenant that will be fulfilled in the future at the salvation of Israel, and there **are** some surrounding this text that clearly have Israel as their focus, you and I, as New Testament believers, partake of the New Covenant. Jesus said at the Last Supper, “This is the new covenant in my blood.” Hebrews says we enjoy the new covenant promises. So here is

what we enjoy, Ezekiel 36, and look at verse 25. Here's this regeneration, this making us new that takes place as part of The New Covenant. Verse 25 says, "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." This is more than forgiveness; this is a cleansing of our souls.

But it's not just a cleansing of our existing souls, verse 26 says, we get a new heart, "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and (I'll) put a new spirit within you." This is, in Paul's terms, becoming a "new creation;" you become a different person at salvation. "...And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and (I'll) give you a heart of flesh." God says, "Listen, I'm going to give you a new heart that loves me and loves my people, I'm **going to** change you." Listen, if you call yourself a Christian, and you've never experienced that kind of change, then you're not a Christian. This is what the Spirit does. This is what happens at true salvation.

But watch verse 27, "I will put My Spirit within you." Here it is, this is the anointing, "I'm going to, at the moment of your regeneration, at the moment you receive new life, I'm **going to** put my Spirit inside of you to dwell, and He will cause you, I will cause you through my Spirit to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." (Paraphrase.) This is why, eventually, every true Christian has evidence of obedience. Why? Because they can't help but have that because they have the Spirit, and the Spirit is going to cause you to walk in His ways, not perfectly, but that's **going to** be the direction of your life. So, this is the promise.

John 14:17 says, "... (the Spirit) abides with you and will be in you." Acts 5:32, "...the Holy Spirit (is) whom God (gives) to those who obey Him." Romans 8:9, listen carefully, Romans

8:9 says this, "...you (believers) are not in the flesh." That is, you're not like you were as you were born, but you are now in the Spirit; that is, you are in the Holy Spirit, "...if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." And then he adds this, this is Romans 8:9, "...But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, He does not belong to (Christ)." If you're a Christian, you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit; that's the "anointing" you received at the moment of your salvation. And when the Spirit came, when He gave you a new spiritual life and came to indwell you, this is the key to where John is going in our text, He enabled you to see that the Scripture is God's Word, and that the Gospel is true. At that moment, you saw, you saw the Scripture as true, and you saw the Gospel as true, because the natural mind, the unredeemed mind cannot hear the truth spiritually.

John 8:43, Jesus says, "Why do you not understand what I'm saying? It is because you cannot hear My word." That is, you lack the capacity, you lack the ability to hear My Word. 1

Corinthians 2:14, "...a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, ...they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them." It doesn't mean he can't understand like if you're sitting here this morning and you're not a believer, you understand what I'm saying in the basic sense; but you don't understand it in a life-giving, life-changing way. You just don't get it. The natural mind is blind to the truth and can only be enlightened by a miracle, the miracle of regeneration.

In fact, look at 2 Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 3, he says, "...if our gospel is veiled (It's hidden, not really seen and comprehended.), it is veiled to those who are perishing." People, who are not redeemed, don't really see and understand the gospel. Why? Verse 4, "in whose case the

god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,” they just don't see it.

So, what has to happen to cause a dead, blind heart to come to life and to see the truth about Jesus Christ and the Gospel? How does that happen? How has anyone ever become a Christian? Look at verse 6, “For God who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness.’” Stop there for a moment, when did that happen? At creation, when God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” He says, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness.’ is the One who has shown in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of (Jesus) Christ.” How do you go from being dead and blind to seeing the gospel and believing the Gospel? There's only one answer, “When God says, ‘Let there be light.’” And when and how does that happen? Look at verse 5, “For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord.” That's how it happens.

You were sitting in a room like this one, hearing somebody like me teach the Word of God, or you were reading the Scripture, or you were remembering something someone had told you a long time ago, somehow you were encountering the Word of God in the Gospel. And God, in that message, that time, maybe a message you'd heard many times before. If you were like me, you grew up in the church, and you could recite it all the time, but on the day of your salvation, something else happened. What? God, in that gospel message, said, “Let there be light and there was light.” That's the only way it happens.

This is why, by the way, we refer to the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and giving us new life as “Irresistible Grace.” Some people caricature that as though, you know, God drags the sinner kicking and screaming to faith. No, that's not it at all.

Listen to what John MacArthur writes in his book, Biblical Doctrines:

Irresistible grace does not mean that man is coerced or forced into repentance and faith. His will is not violated; rather, this grace frees man's will (And listen to this, I love this!). It opens our eyes so that we can accurately compare the glory of sin to the glory of Christ.

I mean, think about this for a moment. How could a person, how could a rational person look at his sin and look at the misery that it has caused his entire life, look at the relationships it's destroyed, look at the enslaving power of that sin, look into the future and see that it will damn him to eternal hell, and look at Christ and His beauty and His glory and the forgiveness He offers and say, “You know what, I'll keep my sin?” It happens because they're blind; they just can't see. But the Holy Spirit comes and, through the gospel, He removes the blindness and, suddenly, you were able to see the comparison. Why? Why would I cling to the glory of my sin which isn't a glory at all, and not the glory of Jesus Christ? But the reason you believe that is because of the work of the Holy Spirit; He accomplished that!

Acts 26:18, Paul describes his ministry of the Word of the gospel as being that which “...(opens) their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of



Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” That was Jesus’s commission to Paul.

So, in regeneration then, the Holy Spirit implants, in the believer, a new heart that, for the very first time, can understand and love spiritual truth. And as you see the gospel, He helps you understand the gospel; you believe the gospel because He gives you faith and repentance to believe.

Now, just to kind of wrap this point up, when it comes to regeneration, this new life given you by the Spirit through the Word, the Father is the ultimate cause of regeneration. James 1:18, “...He brought us forth (He birthed us.) by the...exercise of His will.” The only reason you're a Christian is because God exercised His will, and he helped you see the glory of Christ in the Gospel.

Number two, the Spirit is the efficient cause or agent of regeneration. So, the Father is the ultimate cause; the Spirit is the efficient cause or the agent. Jesus said in John 3:8, “(We are) born of the Spirit.” We’re born again, we're given new life by the work of the Spirit. But what does the Spirit use? The gospel is the instrumental cause. James 1:18, “...He brought us forth by the word of truth.” 2 Thessalonians 2:14, “...He called you through our Gospel.” 1 Peter 1:23, “...you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God...And this is the word that was preached to you.” In the end, those who believe in the gospel, the reason, at the moment of salvation, you believed in the gospel was because of the convicting and illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, who for

the first time in your life helped you to see your sin, opposed to the glory of God in Christ, and the forgiveness that was offered. He said, in that moment, “Let there be light,” and the light dawned in your heart. So that's at salvation.

But after salvation, the Holy Spirit continues this work of illumining the Scripture so that we understand it and are spiritually changed. This teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, His illumination of the Spirit, as theologians call it, is not new information. You know, there's a segment of the Christian faith that says, “You know, the Spirit is constantly giving you new information, new revelation.” That is not what the Scriptures teach.

Instead, the illumination of the Spirit is the spiritual understanding of the inspired text we already have. I won't take the time to do so, but let me just point out to you that again, and again, and again in Psalm 119, the Psalmist says, “Teach me, teach me your word, teach me your word, teach me your word.” It's not that he didn't have the Word; he already had it, had it in his hands. But he understood that he needed to understand it. And the only way he could really understand it in a life changing, spiritually understood way, was through the work of the Spirit.

In John 16:13, we read this, it's a very unusual statement. Listen to this. John 16:13, “...when He (Jesus says.), the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.” Now, let me be very clear, this passage is a promise to the Apostles that the Spirit would enable them to write the New Testament. So, this isn't a promise to us; this is a promise to the Apostles. But there's an important implication in this for us. Because, if the Spirit directed the Apostles into all truth

in the writing of the New Testament, that means when we read and study, the Spirit is guiding us through their writings into all truth.

And more than that, not only do we have the truth in the Scriptures, but the Spirit enables us to grasp it, to understand it in a life changing way. In 1 Corinthians 2, he talks about the fact that the Spirit is responsible for revelation, that is revealing the truth of God to us, and then he says the Spirit is responsible for inspiration. That is, how we got that revelation by “combining spiritual thoughts (the thoughts of the spirit) with spiritual words,” meaning, the very words of Scripture are the words of the Spirit. In other words, He chose. But then in the end of 1 Corinthians 2, he talks about illumination. That is, we can only understand that word through the work of the Spirit. So, the Spirit revealed it; the Spirit inspired it; and the Spirit illumines our understanding of it. 1 John 2:27, “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true, and it's not a lie.” So, at the moment of salvation, the Spirit illumined your understanding of the gospel, and the light dawned in your heart, and you were able to grasp and understand it, and He gave you faith and repentance to believe it.

After salvation, the Spirit continues to open up your understanding of the scripture to help you understand it. And what's the result of that? What's the result of the illuminating work of the Spirit? I think it's captured in Psalm 119:130, listen to this, “The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” As the Spirit of God unfolds His words to us, as the Spirit teaches us, again, those prayers in Psalm 119, “Teach me, teach me, teach me...” How does God teach us? Through His word illumined by His Spirit; as that happens, we get light, we

get understanding. Now, J. I. Packer gives what I think is the best explanation of the Spirit's ongoing illumination in your life and mine. Listen to this, this is what happens, I love this.

Packer writes:

This illuminating work of the Spirit is not a giving of new revelation but a work within us that enables us to grasp and to love the revelation that is there before us in the biblical text, as heard and read, and as explained by teachers and writers. Sin, in our mental and moral system, clouds our minds and wills so that we miss and resist the force of Scripture. God seems to us remote to the point of unreality, and in the face of God's truth, we are dull and apathetic. The Spirit, however, opens and unveils our minds and attunes our hearts so that we understand. As by inspiration, He provided Scripture truth for us, so now by illumination, He interprets it to us. Illumination is thus the applying of God's revealed truth to our hearts, so that we grasp as reality for ourselves, what the sacred text sets forth.

I love that, "We grasp as reality for ourselves, what the sacred text sets forth."

If you're a Christian, you've experienced illumination. You've read through a passage you have read maybe hundreds of times, and all of a sudden, the light comes on. And you're like, "Why did I not get that before?" And if you got it, it's not because you had a brilliant moment. It's because of the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. You have an anointing. So, you were anointed with the Spirit at salvation and the results of that anointing continue in illumination today.

Number five, “What Is the Result of that Anointing?” what is the result of the anointing? Verse 20, says, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.” Now, some translations have a less likely reading, “you know all things.” But the better reading, the one that's more evidenced and makes the most sense in context is the one here in the NAS, and that is, “you all know.” Every believer, without exception, knows, and that's what's said down in verse 27 as well.

Now, before we talk about what that means, what you know, let me be very clear on what this isn't teaching. There are several misunderstandings about these statements and the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. I'm not **going to** develop these; I just want to put them up there, and you can-work through them.

First of all, understand that illumination never functions apart from the Word of God. The Spirit isn't **going to** tell you something that isn't in the Bible. It functions with the Word of God.

Secondly, it does not mean that every Christian will agree on every point of doctrine. It's not **going to** happen because of our human foibles, our misunderstandings at times, all of those things. So, it doesn't mean we're always going to agree on every point of doctrine.

Number three, it doesn't mean that we can know everything about God, Deuteronomy 29:29, “The secret things belong to the LORD...but the things (that He has) revealed belong to us and to our (children) forever.”

Number four, it doesn't replace human teachers. In Ephesians, 4:11, "Christ gave human teachers to His church." (Paraphrase). What is John doing, for goodness sakes, in this letter? He's teaching! So, it's not that we don't need teachers. It does not replace personal Bible study, 2 Timothy 2:15, we're to be diligent to study the Scriptures "...accurately handling the word of truth," it doesn't replace personal Bible study. And it's not a one-time experience either. So, it doesn't mean any of that.

Every believer knows something, we're told in verse 20. Every believer knows something, regardless of how long they've been in the faith, so the question is, what is that thing we all know? What is the truth every believer knows? It's the essential saving truth of the gospel. That's what you know. Every believer knows; how did you learn it? Through hearing the gospel through the regenerating work of the Spirit? You know, and all believers know, the essential saving truth of the gospel.

Now, these comments are especially poignant if you remember what the false teachers were trying to tell these people. They were pre-Gnostics who had infiltrated the church. They were claiming they had a special knowledge from God that only a few initiated people have. They may have even used this term 'anointing' as kind of a technical term for those who were, you know, had that special insight, that special knowledge. John says to faithful believers in the churches, "It's a lie, you all know, every true believer knows, you all know the saving truth." (Paraphrase.) Why? Because you all received the same anointing, the Spirit of Truth. Verse 21, "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it." I have not written, meaning in this section, "I'm not writing these things to you about what you

believe because you don't know them.” (Paraphrase.) He wasn't writing to tell them what they didn't know; he wasn't like the false teachers, claiming these Christians had missed some key truths and needed to be enlightened. Instead, John says, “I just want you to hold on to what you already know, I just want you to hold fast to the essential saving truth that you believed when you came to faith in Jesus Christ.”

That brings us to question number six, “How Does the Anointing Protect Us?” how does the anointing protect us? Why is this important? Verse 21, “I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of (literally, “is out of”) the truth.” What's he saying there? He's saying, because we know the essential saving truth, and we also know that truth and error stand in absolute opposition to **each** other. All true believers understand that the truth is self-consistent, that no lie has its source in the truth. Instead, every lie comes from where? From Satan, the father of lies, John 8:44. Since all true believers know the saving truth of the gospel, we are not tempted to accept a lie when it comes to the essential saving truth of the gospel. Let me bring it down to brass tacks. Here's what he's saying, “If you're a true Christian, you have believed in the biblical Jesus.” You can't be a true Christian without believing in the biblical Jesus, right? So, you have believed in the biblical Jesus.

So, if a Mormon shows up at your door, and says, “Oh, let me tell you, let me tell you who Jesus really was. Jesus was, actually, the physical offspring of God and a woman, and he's the half-brother of Satan.” You know what you're **going** say, as a true Christian? “I don't think so.” Why? Because you have the anointing; you believe the biblical gospel; the Holy Spirit taught

you that gospel at the moment of salvation, and you're not **going to** throw that gospel about Jesus Christ in the trash and believe something else about Him. You believed, if you're a true Christian, you believed in the biblical gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. And so, if Roman Catholic at work tries to convince you that no, you're really saved by your own efforts and works, guess how you're going to respond if you're a true Christian? "I don't think so." Why? Because you have the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the anointing who has taught you the biblical gospel; that's what you believe. And you're not **going to** reject that for something else.

I love this. William Tyndale, put it this way. He said:

You are not anointed with oil in your bodies, but with the Spirit of Christ in your souls, which Spirit teaches you all truth in Christ, and makes you to judge what is a lie and what truth (Listen to this.), and to know Christ from antichrist.

If you're a believer, you don't know everything, you can be misled, you can be confused. But when it comes to the biblical Christ and the biblical gospel, you're never **going to** buy antichrist instead of Christ because the Spirit is not **going to** let that happen.

Now, that brings me very quickly to "Three Major Lessons" from these verses about the anointing, three major lessons. Number one, to become a Christian, you have to know and believe the essential elements of saving truth. We're **going to** look at that more next week because that's what he does in the next three verses. But let me just give you a summary. You have to believe that God, the Creator, the One who made you, sent His eternal Son into the



world as a human being, and He lived a perfect life, and He died a death to satisfy the justice of God so that God could forgive the sins of all who believe in Him, and then God raised Him from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and He declares to all men, everywhere, that there is forgiveness in His name alone, you must repent and believe in Him. In the words of Paul in Romans 10, you must confess Him as Lord. You have to know and believe that and persevere in that to be a Christian.

Number two, if you have believed that, if you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit, and through His work at regeneration, you know the essential elements of saving truth, you know who the biblical Jesus is, you know what the biblical gospel is, you've believed it.

And number three, our Lord, through His Spirit, is **going to** keep you from turning from the biblical Jesus and the biblical gospel. He's **going to** preserve you from believing damning error; that is a wrong Christ or wrong gospel, it's not going to happen! Don't you love John 6:37, where Jesus says, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will (keep him and raise him up at the last day.)" John 10:28-29, he says, "(They're in my hand,) and no one can snatch them (from) My hand...(or from my) Father's hand." And I love Jude 24. It's a book about false teachers and false teachers who teach false Jesus's and false gospels, and how does it end? "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling," doesn't mean keep you from sinning from time to time, all believers do. He means to keep you from stumbling into damning error; it's not **going to** happen! He'll make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy. He will hold you fast! Why? Because you have the Holy Spirit; you've been anointed with the Spirit; you've believed the biblical gospel, that's how you

got in. And you're never **going to** believe anything else if you're a true Christian, because you have the Spirit of God. This is His promise to us.

Let's pray together. Father, we are amazed at your grace to us. We thank you that you have given us your Spirit; that He dwells within us. Thank you that there was a day in our lives when you said, "Let there be light," and there was light! How can we ever thank you, Father? It was by your will, "the exercise of your will that you brought us forth through the word of truth." And, Lord, I pray that you'd give us grateful hearts. May we live in joy and gratitude and obedience because of all that you've done for us in Jesus Christ.

And thank you, oh, God! Thank you that you will not allow your true people to believe damning error, that we will never go wrong in our view of Christ, and our view of the gospel, because we have the Spirit of God.

I pray for those who are here this morning. who have never been truly redeemed. Lord, they're blind, they're dead, they look at the glory of their sin and they compare it to the glory of the gospel and choose their sin! Oh God! Today, may you remove that blindness, may you, who alone can say, "Let there be light," declare light in their souls through the gospel they've heard even this morning? We pray in Jesus's name, Amen.