

The Confession

1 John Series
1 John 2:18-24
Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. One of the most predictable events regarding believers is that some will fall away

1. It is not a new problem, nor is it unique to the body of Christ
2. Paul warned the Ephesian elders
Acts 20:29-30 -- "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. NASB95
3. It was a problem in the Old Testament from the earliest days of Israel's history
Deuteronomy 13:12-15 -- "If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you to live in, *anyone* saying *that* some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' (whom you have not known), then you shall investigate and search out and inquire thoroughly. If it is true *and* the matter established that this abomination has been done among you, you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword. NASB95
4. But, it was a particular concern of New Testament writers
 - a. Matthew 24:5 -- "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. NASB95
 - b. Mark 13:22 -- for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect. NASB95
 - c. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 -- Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, NASB95
 - d. 2 Peter 3:3 -- Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, NASB95

B. John wrote with this same concern in mind

1. 1 John 2:18-24
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.
NASB95

2. Verse 23 is a key statement, and the one we will focus on today
 - a. there is something about what one is will to confess that relates directly to what one believes
 - b. what one believes is either true or false
 - c. if what we believe is false, it is (in this case), of the most spiritually dangerous consequences possible
 - d. the opposite is true as well, if what we believe is true, then it brings us life

I. THE ANTI-CHRIST

A. In recent years, the anti-Christ has become a popular doctrine

1. Much of the time, the focus is on “the” anti-Christ – the idea being that there will come one person who rises up to oppose Jesus Christ
2. There are a lot of frightening things said about the anti-Christ, complete with various identifications as to his identity, where he will come from, what he will do, etc.
3. Interestingly, only John writes specifically about “anti-Christ” and John never limits this to a single, grand enemy of Jesus

B. “Many” anti-Christ’s point to the fact that John is talking about anyone who denies or opposes Jesus Christ, and that are of special danger to Christians

1. There have been (and still are) people who deny Jesus Christ in several ways
 - a. they specifically deny his deity, that he is the Son of God in the sense that he is of the same nature as God
 - b. they deny that he is the sinless Son of God, that he is the perfect righteous man who lived as God in the flesh
 - c. they deny his death and resurrection, that he gave his life as the perfect sacrifice for the sin of mankind and rose from the dead to offer eternal life
 - d. they deny his lordship, that he is head of the church, seated at the right hand of God, and rules the universe
 - e. they deny his return, that he will come to claim his disciples, raise the dead, and provide a home in heaven

C. 1 John 2:22 specifically identifies the issue of John’s concern, and the wording could include Any and all truth about Jesus Christ that someone might deny

1. 1 John 2:22 -- 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. NASB95
2. This is a doctrinal issue, a matter of teaching and truth about Jesus Christ, and it has extensive consequences

- a. again, “the” anti-Christ is anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ
- b. note John’s point – if one denies Jesus, he also denies the Father

II. THE VITAL DOCTRINAL ISSUE – OUR CONFESSION OF JESUS CHRIST

A. 1 Jn 2:21 focuses on the issue that John wanted to stress

1 John 2:21 -- 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 the truth. NASB95

1. John wasn’t writing this to reveal something new to his readers – rather he wanted to remind them of something they already knew
 - a. what they knew was the truth
 - b. they didn’t need the fanciful, mystical, super-secret spirituality of the Gnostics
 - c. they really need to refocus on the truth they already possessed
2. 2:23 – the non-truth, the lie – was the denial of Jesus Christ
3. It only stands to reason then that the truth was the acknowledgement, the confession of Jesus Christ

B. John 14:6

Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. NASB95

1. The one who rejects Jesus Christ is saying one of two things
 - a. there is no way to the Father, including through Jesus Christ
 - b. there is a way to the Father other than through Jesus Christ
 - c. but the statement of Jesus leaves no room for either of these to be true
2. No wonder John made the statement recorded in 2:23

1 John 2:23 -- Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. NASB95

III. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH IS IN THE CONFESSION OF JESUS CHRIST

A. Barclay – “We may say that there are three confessions of Jesus Christ”

1. The confession that he is the Son of God

Matthew 16:16 -- Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” NASB95
2. The confession that he is Lord

Philippians 2:11 -- and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. NASB95

3. The confession that he is the Messiah (the Christ – the anointed one)
1 John 2:22 -- 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. NASB95
4. The essence of each of the confessions is that Jesus stands in a unique relationship with God the Father, and to deny Jesus denies both him and the benefit we receive from him because of that relationship

B. John wants an abiding to take place

1. 1 John 2:24 --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. NASB95
2. John has already had things to say about what was from the “beginning”
 - a. 1 John 1:1 --What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— NASB95
 - b. 1 John 2:7 -- Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. NASB95
 - c. 1 John 2:13-14 -- I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. NASB95
3. He could not stress more the absolute importance of not being moved away from has always been the truth about Jesus Christ
 - a. Believe it
 - b. Confess it
 - c. Live it
 - d. Never reject it

CONCLUSION

A. Remember what Jesus said

1. Matthew 10:32-33 -- “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. NASB95
2. Mark 8:38 -- “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” NASB95

B. Invitation