

1 John 2:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Analysis

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. John identifies the ultimate lie and liar. "Who is a liar" (tis estin ho pseustēs) asks rhetorically—the supreme example of lying follows. "But he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ" (ei mē ho arnoumenos hoti Iēsous ouk estin ho Christos)—the present participle "denieth" (arnoumenos) indicates ongoing, habitual denial. The specific denial is "that Jesus is the Christ"—rejecting that the historical man Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One sent by God.

This denial took various forms in John's context. Gnostic teachers separated the human Jesus from the divine Christ, claiming the Christ-spirit descended on Jesus at baptism and departed before crucifixion. Others denied Jesus' true humanity, claiming He only seemed to have a body (Docetism). All such denials of Jesus' identity as the incarnate Christ constitute the fundamental lie. "He is antichrist" (houtos estin ho antichristos)—houtos (this one) is emphatic. The liar who denies Jesus is THE antichrist, embodying antichrist spirit regardless of whether he is the final Antichrist figure.

"That denieth the Father and the Son" (ho arnoumenos ton patera kai ton huion) reveals the theological consequence. Denying the Son necessarily means denying the Father, because the Father and Son are inseparably united. Jesus taught: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Denying Jesus' identity as the

divine Son means denying the Father who sent Him. There is no knowledge of God apart from the incarnate Son (Matthew 11:27, John 1:18).

Historical Context

The confession "Jesus is the Christ" was foundational to apostolic Christianity. Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)—became the church's cornerstone confession. The Gospel of John was written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:31). Early Christian baptism included confession that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Romans 10:9, Philippians 2:11).

Gnostic denial of Jesus as the Christ took sophisticated forms, often claiming to honor Christ while rejecting Jesus' full humanity or denying His identity as Messiah. John's test cuts through sophistication: whatever teaching denies Jesus is the incarnate Christ embodies antichrist spirit. This test proved crucial for the early church facing various Christological heresies: Arianism (denying Christ's full deity), Nestorianism (dividing Christ's natures), Apollinarianism (denying full humanity). All failed John's test.

Throughout church history, this confession has distinguished orthodoxy from heresy. The ecumenical creeds (Nicene, Chalcedonian) carefully defined Jesus' identity as both fully divine and fully human—the incarnate Christ. Liberal theology's later reduction of Jesus to mere moral teacher or religious genius fell under John's condemnation: denying Jesus is THE Christ (the divine Son incarnate) is the antichrist spirit.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What specific contemporary teachings deny that Jesus is the Christ by separating His humanity from His deity or vice versa?
2. How does confessing 'Jesus is the Christ' serve as a test distinguishing genuine Christian faith from false teaching?
3. Why is denying the Son inseparable from denying the Father, and what does this reveal about the Trinity's unity?

Interlinear Text

Τίς ἐστιν ὁ ψεύστης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι
Who **is** G3588 **a liar** G1487 G3361 G3588 **he that denieth** **that**
G5101 G2076 G5583 G720 G3754

Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ
Jesus G3756 **is** G3588 **the Christ** **He** **is** G3588
G2424 G2076 G5547 G3778 G2076

ἀντίχριστος ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν
antichrist G3588 **he that denieth** G3588 **the Father** **and** G3588 **the Son**
G500 G720 G3962 G2532 G5207

Additional Cross-References

2 John 1:7 (References Jesus): For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

1 John 4:3 (References Jesus): And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

1 John 2:18 (References Christ): Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

Jude 1:4 (References Jesus): For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:23 (Parallel theme): Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

1 John 4:20 (Parallel theme): If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

1 John 1:6 (Parallel theme): If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

1 John 2:4 (Parallel theme): He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

John 8:44 (Parallel theme): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.