

1 John 2:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:
(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

Analysis

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. John elaborates on the inseparable connection between Father and Son. "Whosoever denieth the Son" (pas ho arnoumenos ton huion)—pas (whosoever, everyone) makes this universal without exception. "Denieth" (arnoumenos) means to disown, reject, refuse to confess. This includes explicit rejection ("Jesus is not the Christ") and implicit denial (claiming to worship God while rejecting Jesus).

"The same hath not the Father" (oude ton patera echei)—oude (not even) emphasizes impossibility. One cannot have relationship with the Father while denying the Son. This contradicts claims to know God apart from Christ—whether Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah, Islamic monotheism, or modern pluralism claiming all religions worship the same God. Jesus taught: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Denying Christ severs access to the Father.

"He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (ho homologōn ton huion kai ton patera echei)—homologōn (acknowledgeth) means to confess openly, agree, profess. The present participle indicates ongoing confession, not one-time statement. "Hath the Father also" (kai ton patera echei) promises relationship with the Father through confessing the Son. This is Christianity's exclusive claim: the only way to the Father is through confessing Jesus as the divine Son incarnate. There is no alternative path to God.

Historical Context

This verse addressed multiple first-century contexts. Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah left them without the Father despite claiming covenant relationship. Jesus told unbelieving Jews: "If God were your Father, ye would love me...ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:42, 44). Paul mourned Israel's rejection of Christ (Romans 9:1-5). John affirms: denying Jesus means not having the Father, despite Abrahamic heritage.

Gnostic teachers claimed superior knowledge of the ultimate God while denying or minimizing Jesus' incarnation. John declares such claims false: without confessing Jesus as the divine Son incarnate, one has no relationship with the Father. The Father is known exclusively through the Son (Matthew 11:27). Any claimed knowledge of God contradicting the apostolic testimony to Jesus is false.

This verse became crucial for Christian responses to other religions. Medieval Christianity used it to refute Islamic claims that Muslims worship the true God while denying Christ's deity and sonship. The Reformation affirmed that no religious system denying Christ provides access to God. Modern religious pluralism—claiming all faiths lead to God—contradicts John's exclusive statement. Christian particularity rests on Christology: the Father is accessed exclusively through confessing the Son.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you respond to claims that people can know God (as Father) while denying or ignoring Jesus Christ?
2. What does it mean to 'acknowledge the Son' beyond intellectual assent—how does genuine confession manifest in life?

3. How should this verse shape Christian dialogue with other religions while maintaining both truth and compassion?

Interlinear Text

πᾶς	ὁ	ἀρνούμενος	τὸν	υἱὸν	οὐδὲ	τὸν	πατέρα
Whosoever	G3588	denieth	G3588	the Son	not	G3588	the Father
G3956		G720		G5207	G3761		G3962
ἔχει.	ὁ	ὁμολογῶν	τὸν	υἱὸν	καὶ	τὸν	πατέρα
hath	G3588	(but) he that acknowledgeth	G3588	the Son	also	G3588	the Father
G2192		G3670		G5207	G2532		G3962
ἔχει.							
hath							
G2192							

Additional Cross-References

1 John 4:15 (Parallel theme): Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

John 8:19 (Parallel theme): Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

John 5:23 (Parallel theme): That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

John 10:30 (Parallel theme): I and my Father are one.

1 John 5:1 (Parallel theme): Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Matthew 11:27 (Parallel theme): All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Luke 10:22 (Parallel theme): All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

1 John 2:22 (Parallel theme): Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

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