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“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (I John 2:23).

Confess the Son

Central Truth: True Christians avow that Jesus is the Son of God.

L252. Date: December 1989. **Text:** I John 2:18-27.

Topic: Confession: Of Christ.

“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37).

That is the essential confession of our faith. That is the foundation stone of our religion. The consequences of such a belief are far-reaching because *“every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God”* (I John 4:2), and *“whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”* (I John 5:1).

The confession of faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God was all the testimony Philip needed to hear in order to administer the ordinance of Christian baptism to the Ethiopian (Acts 8). It sounds common in the ears of a Christian today. But that confession bears eternal significance on earth and in heaven.

There are two attitudes toward the doctrine that God came in human flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. (1) The belief of that doctrine shows that a person is of God. (2) The denial of that doctrine shows that a person is not of God but is influenced by the spirit of antichrist. The confession of the incarnation of God in Jesus is serious indeed.

First John 2:18-27 discusses two classes of people: those who deny that Jesus has come in the flesh and those who believe it. Let's examine the issue as John presents it.

I. SOME DENY THE SON

“As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many

antichrists” (I John 2:18).

A. Title — The term antichrist appears only four times in the Christian Scriptures, three times in the first epistle of John and once in his second epistle. Yet, the idea is all through Holy Scripture.

Antichrist means “against Christ, in opposition to Him.” It also means “in the place of Christ, a subtle denial of Him.” Where the devil works there is a spirit and influence of antichrist.

B. Identification — The title antichrist is found in three different applications in the New Testament. (1) It is the spirit of the unregenerate world system which opposes or denies that Christ is the Son of God, God in human flesh (I John 4:3, 4). There are many antichrists today in view of that application. (2) It is any person who embodies the spirit of antichrist or who holds that belief (I John 2:18, 22). Such is a deceiver and an antichrist (II John 7). (3) It is an evil world ruler who will come to power at the end of the age (Revelation 13:11-17). The demonic opposition to the doctrine of Christ, which is common today, will culminate in a political ruler who will unite the world in opposition to Him.

C. Marks — The spirit of antichrist can be identified by the following traits according to I John 2:18-27.

(1) The spirit of antichrist arises in the last days. The presence of such a spirit today is proof that it is the last days in which we live. “*Even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time*” (I John 2:18). But remember “*that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*” (II Peter 3:8). The spirit of antichrist has been here since Christ came.

(2) The spirit of antichrist draws unbelievers away from Bible-believing Christians. “*They went out from us, but they were not of us; . . . they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us*” (I John 2:19). Those who separate themselves from the saints do not have the Spirit of God (Jude 19).

(3) The spirit of antichrist denies the doctrine of the Trinity. Not only does it deny that Jesus is the Christ, but it also denies the Father and the Son (I John 2:22). The New Testament is so clear and positive in the doctrine of the Trinity that no one who believes it or who truly knows God in Jesus Christ can deny it.

(4) The spirit of antichrist denies that Jesus is God in human flesh (I John 2:22). That is the message of the false prophet who denies the Lord who bought him and brings swift destruction upon himself (II Peter 2:1).

(5) The Antichrist's followers are lost. They deny the Son; so they have not the Father who is approached by the Son (I John 2:23). Jesus said no one

comes to the Father but by Him (John 14:6). There is no other name known to man whereby we can be saved (Acts 4:12). So those who deny the Son of God are lost.

(6) The Antichrist seeks to lead believers in Christ away from Him. They are seduced by that wicked teaching (I John 2:26). False prophets and false Christs arise; and, if it were possible, they would seduce God's own elect (Mark 13:22). Some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (I Timothy 4:1). But the faithful of God will hold to the truth in Christ.

(7) The spirit of antichrist is already at work in the world. But in the end of the age it will be personified in a world ruler who will be empowered by the devil. Saints of God know that already, and so can warn the wicked of the dread events ahead. Beware that you are not led into error.

II. SOME CONFESS THE SON

First John 2:20-27 gives seven identifying marks of the believers in Christ. They stand in stark contrast to the followers of the Antichrist. Relate these seven things to yourself.

A. They are anointed with the Holy Spirit (verse 20). The word translated "*unction*" is "anointed." Each Christian has been anointed with the Holy Spirit. It happened when the Spirit came to indwell him. That anointing is a one-time occurrence and abides in him. There is no need to seek a future anointing, for the anointing is the personal presence of the Spirit himself. Rejoice in your anointing!

B. They know the truth of God and the God of truth (verse 21). That is the best thing one could know. It is better than earthly wisdom, strength, or riches of earth (Jeremiah 9:23, 24). To know Him is to have eternal life (John 17:3). The knowledge of the truth of God keeps one from error.

C. They acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God (verse 23). You would expect that, wouldn't you? To deny that Jesus is God in human flesh is to say that God is a liar (I John 5:10). To acknowledge Him and trust Him is to dwell in God and to have God dwell in the believer (I John 4:15).

D. They remain faithful to Christ (verse 24). Fellowship with God the Father and God the Son is the great blessing which comes to those who are faithful. Holding to the right way, the saint finds himself becoming stronger and stronger in the Lord (Job 17:9). The saint can resist the devil and win the victory over him, if he remains faithful to Christ.

E. They have eternal life (verse 25). God has promised eternal life to all who trust Jesus (John 5:24). Saints persevere because they have already

received the life of God. It is lived' in their mortal bodies — the life of eternity lived in the midst of time. It is a present possession, not a future attainment. It enables victorious living now and victory over death then. Praise the Lord!

F. They are opposed by Satan (verse 26). Demonic influences are continually forced upon believers in Christ in an effort to lure them from their Lord. He who lives in believers is greater than he who is in the world; so they need not surrender (I John 4:4). God has provided a spiritual armor by which we can resist successfully and have victory (Ephesians 6:10-18). The battle is real. But believers learn that the devil flees when he is resisted in the Lord (I Peter 5:8, 9).

G. They are taught by the Holy Spirit (verse 27). He is himself the “*anointing*” which all saints have received. He abides unceasingly with us, making His home in our hearts. And He teaches us just as Jesus said He would (John 16:13-15). The one who guided the writing of Holy Scripture is personally present to teach it to those who believe.

This study is dealing with the subject of confessing the Son of God. It is particularly appropriate at Christmas when we celebrate the incarnation of God in human flesh in the baby Jesus. Be sure you keep that emphasis uppermost in your own thoughts, your family activities, and your church activities throughout the season. May God give you a blessed Christian Christmas.

Questions for discussion

1. What is meant by the confession recorded in Acts 8:37?
2. Why is it so important to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?
3. What makes one person confess and another deny that doctrine?
4. What is antichrist?
5. How can antichrist be both a spirit and a person?
6. What identifies the spirit of antichrist today?
7. Why is the spirit of antichrist so opposed to the doctrine of the Incarnation?
8. Why is it so important that the believer confess Jesus Christ?
9. How is water baptism a confession of Christ?
10. In what ways can you confess Him day by day?