

UNCTION & SEDUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

“Ye shall be as gods (Gen. 3:5).” These words which seduced Eve, are just as seductive today. Sinful man lusts for god-hood apart from the God-head, and desires salvation apart from the Savior. When there is a poisonous snake in the garden a loving father warns. The warning is proof of His love, and evidence of his covenantal relationship with his children.

THE TEXT

1 John 2:18-29 — 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. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning: If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

John opened this epistle with a divisive doctrinal claim: Jesus was the Christ, God in the Flesh (1 Jn. 1:1-2). Jesus—John goes on to show—is our only means of union with God and eternal life (1 Jn. 1:2-3); the only way to cleansing from and forgiveness of sins (1 Jn. 1:9); Christ is our Advocate and propitiation (1 Jn. 2:1-2). It is only by knowing God through our covenant head that we are brought to enjoy God’s love (1 Jn. 2:3-5), thereby being enabled to love our brethren (1 Jn. 2:10), and to “love not the world,” which is “passing away (1 Jn. 2:15-17).”

John *warns* against false teachers, who were in some way associated with the early church, but were not *of* the true church. These false teachers were the fulfillment of the prophesied Antichrist (vs.18-19). By contrast, true Christians are anointed ones and know the simple, Gospel truth (vs. 20-21).

John *describes* the false doctrine as the flat denial of Jesus as the Christ; this teaching would be the tell-tale sign that the false teacher is *the* antichrist. Whoever believes or teaches this false teaching does not have the Son, and therefore does not have the Father either (vs.22-23). Those who acknowledge—or confess—the Son, also have fellowship with the Father (v.23, cf. 1 Jn. 1:3).

John *admonishes* fidelity to the apostolic doctrine which they had received “from the beginning” (v.24). Continuing *in* the Son assures believers of the Father’s promise of eternal life *through* the Son (v.25). While false teachers are seducers (v.26), true believers have received an inward and abiding anointing which *instructs* them of the truth, and *guards* them from believing the lies (v. 27). Those who abide in Christ may be confident that Christ’s coming is both a vindication for the righteous, and an assurance of the new birth (vs.28-29).

DEVILISH SEDUCTION

Too often the Gospel plays second fiddle to eschatological speculation. The mere mention of the Antichrist might lead some to trot this text into the eschatological boxing ring in order to prove *who* this figure is. However, John's intent here is primarily evangelical, and thus we see how the Gospel informs and shapes John's eschatology. John vibrantly motions us towards evangelical faith in Jesus Christ as the *ground* for assurance, the *grid* for discerning false teachers, and the *guide* for eschatological conclusions.

The Antichrist was clearly a false teacher; those who adopted these teachings could rightly be called antichrists. I think it likely that John has the heretic Cerinthus in view. He distinguished Jesus the man, from the person of Christ, and taught that Jesus was *not* conceived by the Holy Ghost, Christ came upon Jesus at His baptism, and left him at the crucifixion. Jesus was merely a man that Christ used. He also taught that salvation was found in strict adherence to the Mosaic Law.

John saw that old world was passing away (1 Jn. 2:17), the Lawless One's lawlessness had a chokehold on unbelieving Israel, and Christ had defeated Satan's empire (1 Jn. 3:8). The Gospel of Jesus Christ was rattling loose eschatological implications. Antichrist was not an invader, but a seducer. During the first century, sorcery was common amongst Jewish communities (Acts 8:9, 13:8, 19:19); Judaizers taught that Jesus was insufficient for salvation, and Gentiles couldn't be saved without circumcision (Acts 15:1). The Jews—motivated by *envy*— frequently threatened violence against the early church (Acts. 17:5). Unbelieving Jews refused to place their faith in the Messiah God had promised the Israelites. Rome was wary of this new Way which claimed a new King as the only true way of Salvation, and began to persecute the church like a vicious beast. While simultaneously, pagan Gentiles were streaming into the Church, joining believing Jews, and the covenant promises to Abraham were being fulfilled.

CHRIST'S UNCTION

In baptism, we receive a visible sign of our union with Christ, and the promise of new birth and regeneration. Christ, the Anointed One, anoints his chosen ones in baptism, and they are then known as anointed ones. The Spirit of Antichrist seduces followers, being thus deceived, they are rightly called antichrists. In essence, you become like what you worship and you bear your covenant name.

You either trust in Christ, and thus enjoy all His benefits, or you are seduced by the lusts of this world and the lies of antichrists to trust your idols. Antichrists teach a false christ, and thus offer false salvation. Financial security, social reform legislation, "family values," and health food fussiness are all idols of our day. Closer to home, trying to have the image of a Christian marriage and family without having evangelical faith in Jesus as the aroma of the home is idolatrous.

The unction we've received has marked us out as those who have been set apart and anointed. We have been united with the Anointed One, the Messiah, and we now enjoy all the benefits of His Mediatorial office. His death is yours. His resurrection is yours. You are seated with Him in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). He has given gifts to men (Eph. 4:8). Thus, His Wisdom is yours. His discernment is yours. His righteousness is yours (2 Cor. 5:21). He has the power of endless life (Heb. 7:16). All of it is yours, by faith and trust in Him. He is the head of the new creation, those who trust in Christ are joined with Him in the joys of Kingdom reign.

This union with the Father through His Son is the only remedy for anger filled homes, porn-poisoned marriages, rebellious children, financial woes, and bitterness-riddled relationships. Union with God through the Incarnate Christ brings us into His new creation wherein we are known by our love to the brethren (1 Jn. 2:10, John 13:35). You've received Christ's unction, you are called by His name, so abide in Him, trust in Him, love like Him, walk in His righteousness, and do not be seduced by false saviors. Remember, John wrote all this so that your joy may be full (1 Jn. 1:4).