

*“Two Ways to Live”*

October 2, 2011

Text: 1 John 2:22-25

### **[Picture of Ronald Reagan]**

**Former president Ronald Reagan once had an aunt who took him to a shoemaker for a pair of new shoes.**

The man asked young Reagan, “Do you want square toes or round toes?”

Reagan couldn’t decide.

Several days later the cobbler asked him again what kind of toes he wanted on his shoes, & Reagan still couldn't decide.

So the shoemaker replied, “Well, come by in a couple of Days, and your shoes will be ready.”

When Reagan picked up his shoes, he found that one was square-toed & the other was round-toed.

Later he said, “I learned right then and there, if you don't make your own decisions, someone else will.”

**Today’s text, 1 John 2:22-25, will show us 2 ways to live.**

Because 1<sup>st</sup> John is a book of certainties, which leaves no room for vague-uncertainty, half-truth, or indecision, these 2 lifestyles are presented as extreme opposites=>

“The Way of Denial,” & “The Way of Confession.”

Whether/not they know it, every man/woman on earth has chosen one of these 2 ways to live.

Most would-be “Xns” would rather avoid either extreme, easing by default into a balance between denial/confession.

But the Way of Confession requires a definite decision.  
So if we don't choose to live by it, we automatically live by  
the Way of Denial.

As Ronald Reagan said, "If you don't make your own  
decision, someone else will."

For fallen man, the default decision is a life of denial that  
Jesus is X, the Son of God.

The question is asked: How much of a Xn must I be to be saved?

John's answer: You must deliberately choose the Way of  
Confession, and deliberately reject the Way of  
Denial.

**\* The Way of Denial**

[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."*

**John has already declared several kinds of people to be liars:**

- \* 1 Jn 1:6=> *"If we say that we have fellowship with Him  
and yet walk in the darkness, we **lie**."*
- \* 1 Jn 2:4=> *"The one who says, 'I have come to know  
Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is  
**a liar**."*
- \* In 1 Jn 4:20, John will add 1 more=> *"If someone says, 'I  
love God,' and hates his brother, he is a **liar**."*

But now John uses the most definitive language about liars in his  
whole letter=> *"Who is **the liar**?"* (not just a liar).

I.e., Who is such an arch-liar that his very character is the  
lying essence of the antichrist himself?

John answers=> *"The one who **denies** that Jesus is the Christ."*

The worst of all liars is a person who openly/assertively denies that Jesus is Christ the Messiah.

He is an advocate of the greatest, most Satanic lie of all.

His attitude is no different from that of the Antichrist, and anyone who shares this attitude is an antichrist.

So “antichrist” is not just the villain who will appear during the Tribulation, but a spirit/principle that appears at all times, but will culminate in “the Antichrist,” that final climactic/horrendous character.

**In vs 21 of this chapter, John said, “*No lie is of the truth,*” and in vs 19 he alluded to a group of false teachers who “*went out from us, [because] they were not really of us.*”**

Now the Apostle reveals the nature of this lie & these departing liars, saying they deny, Jesus is the Messiah.

That might lead us to assume these false teachers were Jews who refused to accept Jesus as their Messiah.

But the accusation that Jesus isn’t the Christ carries with it the added thought that He is also not the Son of God.

So the false teacher can be anyone who openly denies Jesus’ deity—that He is the only-begotten Son of God, & therefore that He is God Himself—God incarnate.

To say Jesus is Messiah is the same as saying He is God’s Son.

You see the 2 ideas linked together right here in verse 22.

He is referred to as “Christ” in the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the verse, & as “the Son” in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part—making the 2 terms synonymous.

In Jn 20:31, John connects the 2 even more clearly=>

*“These [things] have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the **Christ**, the **Son of God**.”*

That should erase all doubt that the titles “Christ” and “Son of God” are inexorably linked.

Their meanings aren’t identical, but if Jesus weren’t the Son of God, He could never have been the Messiah, and if He hadn’t been Messiah, He would never have been God’s Son.

We see it also in Peter’s great statement in Mt 16:16=>

*“Thou art the **Christ**, the **Son of the living God**.”*

To deny Jesus is X, the Messiah, is to deny He is God’s-Son/God-incarnate.

“*The liar*” then, according to John, is anyone who openly denies that Jesus is the God-man, as the Bible claims.

- \* He denies God’s incarnation in human flesh, who emptied Himself to take on the likeness of men, uniting a divine nature with a human nature in 1 unified personality.
- \* He denies that the Son of God came to earth as a man, atoned for men’s sins as the perfect human Substitute for His fellow men, and reconciled men to God.

\* He denies the existence of the one Person who is qualified to become man's Savior, & thus he strikes at the heart of the whole Xn faith.

So all Xn doctrine rests on a correct view of Jesus—His Person and His work.

**This is why Jesus was so insistent that His disciples grapple w/ the question “*Who do you say that I am?*” (Mt 16:15).**

The Xn faith is totally dependent on who Jesus was/is.

If He wasn't the Messiah (and therefore God's Son), we have no Savior, because no one else is sinless, and therefore qualified to save us.

Your soul's salvation hangs on your own answer to that question.

Right understanding of Jesus is at the heart of saving faith.

Anyone who says he believes in X, but doesn't believe He is the perfect God-man, & therefore has the right to forgive sins—is not forgiven, and not saved.

No one's faith in X can save him if he doesn't know who X is.

**This is such an important issue that Satan does everything he can to prevent people from learning the truth about X.**

He sends his best deceivers—the antichrists—into the world to teach people false doctrine about Jesus=>

\* E.g. in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, he sent an Egyptian Jew named Cerinthus, who denied Jesus' virgin-birth and said the Christ spirit came upon the man Jesus at His baptism, and left Him just before He died.

\* In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, he sent Marcion, who denied X was the Son of God.

\* In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century he sent Arius/Sabellius, who repeated the same error.

Almost from the beginning of the Church, Satan has used false teachers to attack Jesus' virgin birth, His resurrection, His Ascension, and Second Coming.

But the thrust of the attack has always been against X Himself, the Truth that He was/is both perfect-God/perfect-Man.

And people in every age have refused to acknowledge that He is what Scripture reveals Him to be.

As we saw last time, today's cults (w/o exception) all hold to false/unorthodox views of Jesus' nature, many of which simply repeat these old heresies the Church has long since rejected/repudiated.

The fundamental doctrinal test of the reality of our Xnity, is who we believe Jesus X is.

**All that Scripture says about X is summed up in His name (all the Truth revealed to us about His Person/power/purpose).**

So Acts 4:12 says=> *“There is no other **name** under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be **saved**.”*

By contrast, Jn 3:18 says=> *“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does **not** believe has been judged already, because he has **not** believed in the **name** of*

*the only begotten Son of God.”*

In 1 Cor 15, Paul declares the gospel to the Corinthians.

There he says that the Truth which saves us has everything to do w/ who Jesus X is, & what He did=>

*“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, / and... He was buried, and... He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (15:3-4).*

That, says Paul, is the gospel!

No one can be saved who doesn't understand/believe in the name of Jesus (His titles) —X, the Son of God.

If one believes Jesus is just a good man, good teacher, or admirable philosopher, he believes in a Jesus who is impotent to save him.

**John says that anyone with the spirit of antichrist denies not only Jesus, but also God the Father.**

That's because the Father & the Son are one in essence.

If the Father were to make Himself visible and come to earth, what would He be like? Jesus.

In the Upper Room, the Apostle Philip said to Jesus=>

*“Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”*  
Jesus answered=> *“Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:8-9).*

Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature (Heb 1:3).

Anyone who thinks he can believe in God and yet deny that Jesus is both God/Man, is wrong.

**So that leaves us with only 2 ways to live=> Either deny both the Father/Son, or confess both the Father/Son.**

[Verse 23]=> “Whoever *denies* the Son does not have the Father; the one who *confesses* [says the same thing Scripture says about] *the Son has the Father also.*”

John describes 2 types of people living 2 kinds of life here=>

- \* Those who habitually/repeatedly confess Jesus as the Son of God,
- \* And those who habitually/repeatedly deny Him.

**By “Confession” John means a public acknowledgement or declaration of one’s beliefs-about/trust-in Jesus.**

It’s an open expression of our faith in Him, just as “denial” is a public/open expression of one’s disbeliefs about Jesus.

This is the kind of confession/denial Jesus was talking about in Mt 10:32=> “*Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. / But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven*” (32-33).

Like John, Jesus also declared these same 2 extremes, and left no room for a middle ground of comfortable compromise.

Saving faith is not secret faith, hiding itself in silent denial.

It is open acknowledgement of our belief in X.

So Rom 10:9-10=> “*If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; / for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and*

*with the **mouth** he confesses, resulting in salvation.”*

**Anyone who denies the Son of God, doesn't have the Father;  
anyone who openly confesses the Son has both the  
Father/Son.**

God is a transcendent/invisible Spirit.

He can only be known through the written Word of  
Scripture, and the Living Word—Jesus Christ, the  
incarnation of God.

If we reject/deny what Scripture says about X, we have no way of  
learning anything at all about the Father.

So in Lk 10:16, Jesus said=> *“He who rejects Me  
rejects the One who sent Me.”*

To deny Jesus, the Son of God, is to deny/repudiate the Father,  
for several reasons=>

1) Because divine Fatherhood requires divine Sonship.

If Jesus isn't the Son of God, God the Father isn't  
really a father at all, since Jesus is His  
only-begotten Son.

2) Because Only the Son can reveal the Father to man.

God has given us no other living revelation of  
Himself.

3) Because only through Jesus the Son can we have a  
relationship with God the Father.

As Jesus Himself said (Jn 14:6)=> *“No one comes to  
the Father, but through Me.”*

On the other hand, if we confess (agree with) what Scripture says about X, believing in Him, we have the only real/personal knowledge man can have at the present time, about God the Father.

On the night before His death, Jesus told His Apostles=>

*“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him”* (Jn 14:7).

Why? Because they’d seen/known Jesus, His Son.

Having learned about God, the believer comes to know

Him, forming a personal relationship with Him

through His divine Son/Mediator—Jesus X.

He no longer has to live his life in denial of God.

### **\* The Way of Confession**

**John has just said that a person who confesses the Son**

***“has”* the Father also.**

But what does he mean by *“has the Father”*?

John explains it with the word *“abide”* in the next verse.

It means to have an ongoing connection with the Father,

that makes Him central to our lives.

John’s terminology always has to be defined.

Let’s define 3 of his terms in this passage=>

\* *“Confession”* is outward identification with X.

\* To *“have the Father”* describes the inward reality which we confess outwardly (inward possession of a relationship with God).

\* “*Abide*” describes the permanent vitality of that relationship.

“*Abide*” appears 6 times in verses 24-28, so this is an idea John is clearly emphasizing.

He’s talking about keeping our love for the Truth about God fresh in our hearts/minds.

It’s not merely assenting to the Truth then ignoring it;

It’s embracing it, then constantly calling it to mind, living our lives by it.

[Verse 24]=> “*As for you [you believers who confess the Son, as opposed to the antichrists who deny Him], 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.*”

**“*Abide*” literally/basically means to remain, stay put, or stay the same.**

How many things do you know that have stayed the same?

[Picture—555px-Dan]

Think about clothing fashions, or trends in politics, or the various places you’ve lived throughout your lifetime.

[Picture—sixties-hair]

Think about the different ways you’ve worn your hair.

John says=> “*Let that **abide** in you which you heard from the beginning*” and he is talking about unchanging biblical Truth.

But it's hard to let the Truth of God's Word abide, stay put, and maintain its priority in our thoughts when our minds are constantly being bombarded by other things.

\* Some of them have to do with the endless details of daily life, which demand our attention.

\* Some of them have to do with unbiblical/anti-biblical ideas of the world.

E.g. what we see in the movies these days is strongly influenced by Eastern philosophy, & is almost always based on evolutionary presuppositions.

Some "Xns" welcome all this into their own thinking process, believing that kind of open-mindedness is spiritually healthy.

But they are like the people in II Tim 3:7, who are=>

*"Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

They never come to solid convictions about the truth because they don't want to.

They just enjoy uncommitted toying with new ideas.

They are like the pagan Athenians in Acts 17:21 who=>

*"used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new"* (philosophical gadflies).

But our lives are established on the ancient, unchanging words of the Bible.

So Peter wrote in his second epistle=> *"I shall always be*

*ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you” (II Pet 1:12).*

**We live in an ever-changing environment, our minds being constantly flooded w/ all kinds of new input, all week long.**

So how is the 2 hours we spend here on Sunday, focusing on the Lord, supposed to offset that kind of worldly barrage?

The answer is to “*let that **abide** in you which you heard from the beginning*” by taking active steps to keep the Truth of God’s Word in the vital forefront of our thoughts.

Keep making it a part of each moment of our lives.

As Rom 12:2 puts it, “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind.*”

How?

- \* Meditate on God’s Word daily, & fill your thoughts w/ it.
- \* Listen to biblically sound Xn music, whenever you can.
- \* Place Xn literature/artwork at strategic intersections of your house/life to remind you of the importance of what you have heard from the very beginning of your Xn life.
- \* “*Pray without ceasing*” as Paul says in I Thes 5:17.
- \* Do whatever it takes to learn to treasure Scripture Truth, above everything else.

**John makes us a promise in verse 24=> “If what you heard**

*from the beginning **abides** [remains] in you, you also will **abide** in the Son and in the Father.”*

Do you want a closer/more-vibrant relationship with God  
the Father and God the Son?

Then abide in the Truth of God’s Word.

X calls us to an open confession that rules out half-heartedness.

He was surrounded with half-hearted people wanting all the  
benefits He had to give, w/o their being committed to  
Him.

So He made a statement intended to shock them, either into  
commitment, or out of their self-deception that they  
were believers.

He told them=> *“He who **eats My flesh & drinks My blood**  
**abides** in Me, and I in him. / As the living Father sent  
Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who **eats**  
**Me**, he also shall live because of Me”* (Jn 6:56-57).

Eating X’s flesh and drinking His blood is the opposite of  
dead/uncommitted dabbling in the Xn truth/life.

Winston Churchill was once asked if he was a pillar in the church  
to which he responded=> “I’m more like a flying buttress.  
I support it from the outside” (i.e., a polite/distant  
relationship).

Those who eat X’s flesh & drink His blood, abide in Him.

X supports/strengthens them from within, and they are in  
Him—in total spiritual union with Him.

They commune daily w/ God-the-Father/God-the-Son, as they abide in God, abide in God's Word (Jn 8:31), and abide in God's love (Jn 15:9).

They are also the ones whose prayers get answered, because Jesus said (Jn 15:7)=> *"If you **abide** in Me, and My words **abide** in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you."*

**The payoff for those who abide in X is eternal life.**

[Verse 25]=> *"And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life."*

**If a person treasures God's Word, because he treasures his relationship with God-the-Father/God-the-Son, based on that Word, he has eternal life.**

But when does he receive it? In heaven? No, now.

Jesus said=> *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes **has** eternal life"* (Jn 6:47).

His experience of eternal life will climax in heaven, but he begins to enjoy it right here in this life.

He already has it, because the essence of eternal life is a personal relationship with God, which he has from the moment he believes.

In Jn 17:3, Jesus prayed to the Father, *"This is **eternal life**, that they may **know Thee**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."*

So eternal life is knowing God the Father/Son in a personal relationship which involves fellowship/communion w/ Him.

How do we attain such a relationship with God?

By forming a personal relationship w/ Jesus X by faith in Him, as the Son of God who is revealed in Scripture.

I.e., eternal life is found in union with God through a personal relationship with Jesus X.

As a person reads what the Bible says about X, and the H.S. empowers him to believe it, he receives eternal life.

**But a saving relationship like that must be an abiding, interactive, long-term, loving relationship, built on commitment, not casual interest.**

So Jesus said=> *“Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood**, you have no [eternal] life in yourselves. / He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life & I will raise him up on the last day”* (Jn 6:53-54).

X wasn't talking about consuming His literal flesh/blood, and no one (even the Apostles) did that in His day.

He was talking about our taking His life into ourselves, feasting spiritually on His grace/goodness, and nourishing our souls on a personal relationship with Him.

To do that is to gain eternal life; not to do that is eternal death—eternal separation from God, the Source of life.

\*Antichrists deny the faith, depart from it, & lose any hope of life.

\*Xns confess the faith, abide in it, & receive the fulfillment of God's promise—eternal life.

This is exactly what X promised=> *"I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly"* (Jn 10:10).

**As we abide in X, we abide in His love, because He said=>**

*"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love"* (Jn 15:9).

How? =>

1) Our minds abide/meditate on the fact that His love is tried/true/faithful.

He loved us before we existed, He has loved us when we weren't what we should be, He has loved us unto salvation, & He continues to love us despite our sin even now.

When life takes us through hard times, we fall back on His love, and His love goes w/ us.

2) We abide in the truth that His love is totally free/undeserved.

\* It was unbought/unsought on our part.

\* X saw the spiritual deformities of our sin/folly, & yet He loved us anyway.

\* X continues to love us, despite our indifference/coldness  
and even rudeness towards Him at times.

\* X loves those who need His love most, & can least repay  
it.

3) We abide in the knowledge that Jesus loved us so much, He  
sacrificed His own life to save us from sin/death;

That by His grace we are saved.

He didn't love simply in word, but in deed/truth, stretching  
out His hands to be nailed to a cross on our behalf for  
our sin.

### **Conclusion**

**There are 2 ways to live=>** Deny that Jesus is X the Son of God  
who died to save us; or openly confess Him as God  
incarnate, our Savior/Lord, & abide forever in His love.

I hope/pray, dear folks, that either you are, or you will, become  
confessors of Jesus as X, the Son of God;

But also as your own personal Savior/Lord.

**“Two Ways to Live”**  
September 28, 2011

Text: 1 John 2:22-25

1. **Today’s text will show us 2 ways to [10 live].**

**\* The Way of Denial**

**[1 John 2:22]**

I Jn 1:6; 2:4; 4:20

2. The worst of all liars is a person who openly, assertively denies that Jesus is [14 Christ] the Messiah.

I Jn 2:21, 19; Jn 20:31; Mt 16:16

3. “The liar,” according to John, is anyone who openly denies that Jesus is the God-man as the [12 Bible] claims.

Mt 16:15

4. This is such an important issue that Satan does everything he can to prevent people from learning the truth about [14 Christ].

Acts 4:12; Jn 3:18; I Cor 15:3-4

5. John says that anyone with the spirit of antichrist denies not only Jesus but also God the [14 Father].

Jn 14:8-9; Heb 1:3

**[Verse 23]**

6. By “*confession*” John means a public acknowledgement or declaration of one’s beliefs about and trust in [12 Jesus].

Mt 10:32-33; Rom 10:9-10; Lk 10:16

7. To deny Jesus, the Son of God, is to deny and repudiate the [14 Father].

Jn 14:6, 7

**\* The Way of Confession**

8. “*Abide*” is an idea John is emphasizing; he is talking about keeping our love for the truth about God [12 fresh] in our hearts and minds.

**[Verse 24]**

II Tim 3:7

9. Some people enjoy uncommitted toying with new ideas; but our lives are established on the ancient words of the [12 Bible].  
II Pet 1:12; Rom 12:2; I Thes 5:17
10. Christ calls us to an open confession that rules out [10 half] heartedness.  
Jn 6:56-57; 8:31; 15:9; 15:7
11. The payoff for those who abide in Christ is [16 eternal] life.  
**[Verse 25]**  
Jn 6:47; 17:3; 6:53-54; 10:10
12. As we abide in Christ, we abide in His [10 love].  
Jn 15:9
13. There are two ways to live: Deny that Jesus is Christ the Son of God who died to save us; or openly confess Him as God incarnate, our Savior and Lord, abiding forever in His [10 love].