

1 John 2:22 (NIV)

Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist-- he denies the Father and the Son.

It is said in some Christian circles that: “If you do not believe that Jesus Christ is God, you are of the spirit of the antichrist.” 1 John 2:22 has often been used to support this idea, but what does it *actually* say? Let us look at it in its context:

The context of the verse has to do with how there will be many antichrists that come as the Church Administration unfolds. Once the revelation contained in the Church Epistles was revealed, which it had been by the time 1 John was written, Satan began to assault people with all kinds of false doctrines. The “many antichrists” are people who promote such doctrines and practices that are *anti* (against)-Christ, that is, against the truth about who Jesus really is and what he did on our behalf. Verse 19 goes on to say that, “they went out from us, but they did not really belong to us.” This is referring to those who pretended to be a part of the family of God, yet were really working on behalf of the enemy and against Christ. In the same vein, 2 John 7 makes that clear:

2 John 7 (NIV)

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

So how do we know *who* is “antichrist” and *who* is for Christ and God?

1 John 2:22 says that anyone who denies that Jesus is the *Christ* (Messiah) is a liar, that is, the words he speaks go against the truth of God’s Word. “Messiah” comes from the Hebrew word *mashiach*, which means “anointed.” “Christ” comes from the Greek word *christos*, which also means “anointed.” Thus, linguistically, Messiah = Christ = the anointed one.

Given that words have definitive meanings, especially as God uses them in His Word, this makes it clear that someone had to anoint him, and of course, that was God, His Father, as per the following verse:

Acts 10:38 (NIV)

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

God anointed Jesus, and thus Jesus is truly, “the Christ (anointed one) of God.”

Genesis 3:15 is the very first reference to the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind, and it sets forth the truth that the Messiah would be a human being, a man born of a woman. All other Messianic prophecies follow suit: the Messiah would be a man, albeit the only begotten Son of God.

The key to salvation is to believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior (the Messiah), who died for our sins and is now the exalted Lord. The following verses are most pertinent:

Acts 2:32-36 (NIV)

(32) God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

(33) Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

(34) For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand

(35) until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'"

(36) "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

In conclusion, although some people assert that: "If you do not believe that Jesus Christ is God, you are of the spirit of the antichrist," there is not Scriptural evidence to support that belief. An antichrist believes that Jesus is not the Christ, or does not acknowledge that Christ has come in the flesh. However, many people believe Jesus is the Christ and that he came in the flesh without also believing he is God. Furthermore, there is no Scripture that says that if you believe Jesus is not God you are an antichrist.

Can a person also be a Christian and a member of the family of God without believing that Jesus is God? The answer is yes, he or she most certainly can. Romans 10:9, which gives simple instructions on salvation, says nothing about believing that Jesus is God. The true question is, "who is Jesus Christ?" We assert that he is a man (1 Tim. 2:5), our Savior, our Redeemer, our Mediator, our Lord, our constant Companion, our Best Friend, our Big Brother, the Light of our lives, our Peace, our Joy, the Son of God and our Mentor in the art of faith.

Biblically speaking, you are saved if you do what Romans 10:9 says.

Romans 10:9 (NIV)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

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