

Session 5

*An Exposition of I John*

*I John 2:19–24*

Scriptures

*I John 2:19*  
*Galatians 5:9*  
*Matthew 13:25*  
*Luke 14:33*  
*I John 2:20*  
*I John 2:21*

*I John 2:22*  
*Romans 1:4*  
*Acts 2:36*  
*Matthew 16:13–17*  
*Luke 2:11*  
*I John 2:23*

*II Corinthians 5:19*  
*John 1:12*  
*Galatians 4:6*  
*I John 2:24*  
*Matthew 24:13*

*I John 2:19 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.*

*They went out from us, but they were not of us.*

John's words prove that those who depart from the faith were never really of it.

Apostates can and will remain with true believers for a time, but then there will arrive a day when their false professions of faith become manifest.

Impure motives are not enough to keep men faithful to their religion for their entire life.

Jesus' disciple Judas is an example of this. Though he walked with the Lord Jesus for a number of years, his true inward character eventually came to be made known.

Spiritual counterfeits therefore cannot and will not remain faithful to Christ unto the end—as their allowed departure from the faith is purposed to be revealed by God that they were never true saints.

*Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*

Even a small amount of religious hypocrisy will affect the growth of a Christian assembly. Because the Lord allows the departure of those who once called themselves Christians, the influence they once had or could have had in the true church of Christ is greatly diminished.

Thus, when men depart from Christ, Whom they once professed to follow, they soon lose their authority to influence all who remain loyal to Him.

To understand apostasy properly, it is important to know first that those who leave the faith were once considered part of it. They took on the habits of conversion, but were never truly converted.

Second, God allows their departure so that their false profession of faith might be fully known, removing any confusion as to what true faith really is.

Third, with the departure of these counterfeit believers, the true church of Christ is better able to grow in the divine qualities of love and spiritual unity.

When schisms are removed, even if they were undetected by many, then harmony and peace are more freely able to flourish among the redeemed.

A long-standing practical military tactic in warfare is to infiltrate the enemy and cause as much internal disruption as possible. Satan does this by planting people with false motives among those whose hearts are pure towards the Savior.

Planting tares among the wheat is a common devilish practice in the spiritual realm.

***Matthew 13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 13:25*

*While men slept, his enemy came . . .* —That is, “in the night,” when it could be done without being seen, an enemy came and scattered bad seed on the new plowed field, perhaps before the good seed had been harrowed in. . . .

*Sowed tares*—By “tares” is probably meant a degenerate kind of wheat, or the darnel-grass growing in Palestine. In its growth and form it has a strong resemblance to genuine wheat; but it either produces no grain, or that of a very inferior and hurtful kind. Probably it comes near to what we mean by “chess.” It was extremely difficult to separate it from the genuine wheat, on account of its similarity while growing.

“The tare abounds all over the East, and is a great nuisance to the farmer. It resembles the American ‘cheat (chess),’ but the ‘head’ does not droop like cheat, nor does it branch out like oats. The grain, also, is smaller, and is arranged along the upper part of the stalk, which stands perfectly erect. The ‘taste’ is bitter, and when eaten separately, or even when diffused in ordinary bread, it causes dizziness, and often acts as a violent emetic. Barn-door fowls also become dizzy from eating it. In short, it is a strong soporific poison, and must be carefully winnowed, and picked out of the wheat grain by grain, before grinding, or the flour is not healthy. Even the farmers, who in this country generally ‘weed’ their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other. They would not only mistake good grain for them, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. Both, therefore, must be left to ‘grow together’ until the time of harvest.”—(Thomson) “The Land and the Book,” vol. ii. pp. 111, 112. Thus, “tares” aptly represented hypocrites in the church. Strongly resembling Christians in their experience, and, in some respects, their lives it is impossible to distinguish them from genuine Christians, nor can they be separated until it is done by the Great Searcher of hearts at the day of judgment. An enemy the devil hath done it. And nowhere has he shown profounder cunning, or done more to adulterate the purity of the gospel.

Men depart from anything because there is someplace more pleasing to them where they wish to go. When men depart from the faith, however, there is no place to go but back to the world.

There are but two forms of government that men will ultimately choose to align themselves with. First, it is the government through which the god of this world, Satan, sets the parameters on how men can live while in it. In this worldly government Satan promises much freedom. Not only can men live as they will, with no judgment, but they are also encouraged to embrace self-will and self-government. In Satan’s world, self-love and self-will are far more preferable than love for God and subjection to divine will.

Those who love the world and are willing to depart from the faith for it reveal themselves as preferring human government, or the government of self, man, and Satan, over the heavenly rule of God. Human will is embraced over divine will, and rejection of God is chosen over obedience to God's commandments.

By leaving the faith and the body of believers who still practice it, apostates reveal that they never really possessed true piety at all.

Though they may have walked among the saved, their love for the world ultimately reveals no sincere love for God and the higher spiritual realm was ever held.

What men love they will always eventually serve, and those who love the world will possess no compunction in leaving God and His people for the world.

The true test of discipleship, therefore, is whether a man is willing to forsake all for Christ, or if he will forsake Christ for earthly and worldly affections.

***Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Luke 14:33*

*Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not . . . —Better, that renounceth not. This, then, was the immediate lesson which the company of eager disciples had to learn: to say good-bye to their "all," whatever that might be. Fishing-nets and hired servants, or great possessions, or ease and safety, or besetting sins, or fancied righteousness—all had to be renounced. The word for "forsake" is that which was afterwards used in the baptismal formula, "I renounce the devil and all his works," and the same as that which is translated "bidding farewell" in Luke 9:61, Acts 18:18.*

The standard of leaving everything to follow Christ is the true test of discipleship. This standard is that which Jesus Himself set, and it should never be lowered by men, who do not possess sufficient divine love to keep it.

To ultimately be saved by the Son of God, a man must be willing to leave everything for Him. There can be no compromise on this great spiritual truth.

To properly follow the Son of God, the penitent must be willing to leave and give up everything contrary to Christ's will for his life. There can remain nothing between the Lord and those purposed to be of His fold. If there is, then this only proves that Jesus Christ is not their Lord.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Luke 14:33*

*[So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.]* 1. Every man who becomes a follower of Jesus should calmly and deliberately look at all the consequences of such an act and be prepared to meet them.

2. Men in other things act with prudence and forethought. They do not begin to build without a reasonable prospect of being able to finish. They do not go to war when there is every prospect that they will be defeated.

3. Religion is a work of soberness, of thought, of calm and fixed purpose, and no man can properly enter on it who does not resolve by the grace of God to fulfil all its requirements and make it the business of his life.

4. We are to expect difficulties in religion. It will cost us the mortification of our sins, and a life of self-denial, and a conflict with our lusts, and the enmity and ridicule of the world. Perhaps it may cost us our reputation, or possibly our lives and liberties, and all that is dear to us; but we must cheerfully undertake all this, and be prepared for it all.

5. If we do not deliberately resolve to leave all things, to suffer all things that may be laid on us, and to persevere to the end of our days in the service of Christ, we cannot be his disciples. No man can be a Christian who, when he makes a profession, is resolved after a while to turn back to the world; nor can he be a true Christian if he “expects that he will” turn back. If he comes not with a “full” purpose “always” to be a Christian; if he means not to persevere, by the grace of God, through all hazards, and trials, and temptations; if he is not willing to bear his cross, and meet contempt, and poverty, and pain, and death, without turning back, he “cannot” be a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

When men leave the faith, they will return to the world, which in fact they never really left. There is no other place to go than this, and apostates are more than comfortable with their choice.

Whenever, then, men leave the faith, this is purposed by God to reveal that they were never really of it, since no man truly saved by the Son of God would depart from Him to again gain fellowship with a world that has rejected God and desires no true intimacy with Him.

*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I John 2:19*

*They went out from us*—From the church. That is, they had once been professors of the religion of the Saviour, though their apostasy showed that they never had any true piety. John refers to the fact that they had once been in the church, perhaps to remind those to whom he wrote that they knew them well, and could readily appreciate their character. It was a humiliating statement that those who showed themselves to be so utterly opposed to religion had once been members of the Christian church; but this is a statement which we are often compelled to make.

*But they were not of us*—That is, they did not really belong to us, or were not true Christians. See the notes at Matthew 7:23. This passage proves that these persons, whatever their pretensions and professions may have been, were never sincere Christians. The same remark may be made of all who apostatize from the faith, and become teachers of error. They never were truly converted; never belonged really to the spiritual church of Christ. . . .

*But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us*—It was suffered or permitted in the providence of God that this should occur, “in order” that it might be seen and known that they were not true Christians, or in order that their real character might be developed. It was desirable that this should be done:

(a) in order that the church might be purified from their influence—compare the notes at John 15:2;

(b) in order that it might not be responsible for their conduct, or reproached on account of it;

(c) in order that their real character might be developed, and they might themselves see that they were not true Christians;

(d) in order that, being seen and known as apostates, their opinions and conduct might have less influence than if they were connected with the church;

(e) in order that they might themselves understand their own true character, and no longer live under the delusive opinion that they were Christians and were safe, but that, seeing themselves in their true light, they might be brought to repentance.

***I John 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.***

In contrast to those who were never true followers of Christ and who departed from the fellowship of the godly, true Christians are those who have the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Practically, for men to be destroyed they must first be deceived, and God's Holy Spirit provides spiritual discernment so that the true children of God will not be.

Hence, the Holy Spirit not only makes personal sin known to the Christian, but It also allows him to discern where God's true Spirit abides, and where it does not. This unction, this anointing from the Holy Spirit, is what ultimately allows Christians to discern between truth and error.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 2:20*

Those anointed of God in Christ alone can resist those anointed with the spirit of Satan, Antichrists, who would sever them from the Father and from the Son. Believers have the anointing Spirit from the Father also, as well as from the Son; even as the Son is anointed therewith by the Father. Hence the Spirit is the token that we are in the Father and in the Son; without it a man is none of Christ. The material unguent of costliest ingredients, poured on the head of priests and kings, typified this spiritual unguent, derived from Christ, the Head, to us, His members. We can have no share in Him as Jesus, except we become truly Christians, and so be in Him as Christ, anointed with that unction from the Holy One. The Spirit poured on Christ, the Head, is by Him diffused through all the members.

***I John 2:21 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.***

The apostle understood that the people to whom he was writing knew the truth. Because of the Spirit's anointing and influence on their lives, they could discern between truth and error, as well as any false and deceiving spirits, impersonating themselves being of God.

Having actually come to know God, true Christians therefore are brought to know the truth, and because of this, the chance for spiritual deception can be avoided.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:21*

Error often appears plausible. It seems to be adapted to relieve the mind of many difficulties which perplex and embarrass it on the subject of religion. It seems to be adapted to promote religion. It seems to make those who embrace it happy, and for a time they apparently enjoy religion. But John says that however plausible all this may be, however much it may seem to prove that the doctrines thus embraced are of God, it is a great and vital maxim that no error can have its foundation in truth, and, of course, that it must be worthless.

***I John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.***

*Denieth that Jesus is the Christ.*

The word for *Christ* is #5547 *Christos*. *Strong's Concordance* defines this word as “the Anointed One; the Messiah, the Christ.”

From this we can see that to deny Christ is to deny the Messiah. Anti-Christ is actually anti-Messiah. To deny Christ is to deny Him Whom God has declared will rule the world.

Recognizing the critical truth that Jesus is the Messiah means both believing in and subjecting oneself to the power and lordship God has said now is the Son's.

In recognizing Jesus Christ's person as the Messiah, two important revelations from God must be believed. The first is that Jesus is God's appointed Ruler of the world. The second is that His right to rule the world stems from His relationship with God as God's only-begotten Son.

Jesus' divine sonship was proven by God raising Him from the dead.

***Romans 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.***

Not to recognize Jesus as the Son of God, and not to subject oneself to Him, Whom God has declared will rule the world, is to be anti-Christ.

Therefore, it is not enough to know Jesus as nothing more than a historical figure, nor only profess His name to be saved. This is insufficient for salvation.

For God will save no one who is not willing to yield to, and subject himself to, the Lord's purposed Ruler of the world.

***Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.***

It is God Who has made and established Jesus to be the Christ; thus, any who reject Him must also reject the heavenly Father in the process.

To be anti-Christ is ultimately recognized as being anti-God, Who sent His Son.

*He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

When men deny the Son and His authority over their lives, they must subsequently deny the Father.

The Father and Son are one; thus, to reject Jesus as Messiah is to reject the Father Himself. No bond is more important in Christianity than the one between God and His only begotten Son.

If any remove Jesus Christ and deem Him unessential in knowing the Father, then he is left with nothing but human and vain imagination as the foundation of his faith.

Without also the light of the Son of God revealing the true essence of God, God's ways, His judgments, and His purposes for man would forever remain a mystery.

It is in Christ that God has chosen to make Himself both known and seen, and only through God's Son can men be saved by God.

Recognizing Jesus as the Christ, God's promised Messiah, is critical in order to gain salvation from God.

It was first this belief, that Jesus is the Messiah, that led Peter to become one of the Lord's disciples.

*Matthew 16:13–17* When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

<sup>14</sup> And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

<sup>15</sup> He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

<sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Peter's recognition of Jesus as *the Christ, the Son of the living God* reveals that he knew the true nature of Jesus and the authority that God had given Him.

*Christ and Lord* cannot be separated.

Thus, to sincerely believe in the Son of God must result in making Jesus Lord of your life.

The birth of Jesus signified that Jesus was purposed to be not only this world's Savior but also her Lord.

*Luke 2:11* For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Luke 2:11

*Christ the Lord*] "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ," Acts 2:36; Php 2:11. 'Christ' or 'Anointed' is the Greek equivalent of Messiah. . . . "We preach Christ Jesus the Lord," 2 Corinthians 4:5 (see Php 2:11; Romans 14:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; "No one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Corinthians 12:3).

*I John 2:23* Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.*

To deny the Son is to deny God's authority over your life. This denial, ultimately, means to refuse to submit to God's rule or follow His person.

In the Son, God has made Himself known; consequently, to deny the Son is to reject the very one God sent to reconcile man to Himself.

*II Corinthians 5:19* To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Sinners often foolishly believe that they can casually believe in God, and be saved by Him, without any true subjection to God's Son. Time will reveal this to be a great spiritual miscalculation.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 2:23

*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*—That is, has no just views of the Father, and has no evidence of his friendship. It is only by the Son of God that the Father is made known to people, Matthew 11:27; Hebrews 1:2–3, and it is only through him that we can become reconciled to God, and obtain evidence of His favor.

*He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

A true relationship with God begins when one accepts the Son of God and genuinely believes in His heavenly authority.

***John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.***

It is the Son of God Who provides the privilege of being brought into the family of God.

Therefore not until Jesus Christ is fully received can men possess any true hope of becoming sons of God themselves.

*He that acknowledgeth the Son* and is spiritually baptized by Him is given the Spirit of God, confirming adoption into the family of God. By receiving the Holy Spirit through Christ, it is confirmed and verified that spiritual sonship has occurred.

But if a man lacks receiving the Holy Spirit from Christ, then God has declared that he is none of His.

Ultimately, only when men have been given the Holy Spirit through belief in the Son of God can they know they have been made to become sons of God themselves.

***Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Gal. 4:6*

*And because ye are sons*—As a consequence of your being adopted into the family of God, and being regarded as his sons. It follows as a part of his purpose of adoption that his children shall have the spirit of the Lord Jesus.

***I John 2:24 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.***

Once a man has been made a son of God, he must remain loyal to Christ's calling in order to maintain both fellowship and relationship with the Father and Son.

In no place does Scripture allow for unfaithfulness after conversion. Since the Lord provides no second renewal, nor adding of mercy for any who, once exposed to the Son of God, then walk away from Him.

To make Jesus Christ Lord is to make Him the ultimate authority, not only presently over your life, but also throughout the entirety of your life.

Continuance of faith, and loyalty to Jesus Christ are essential to entering the eternal life offered by Him.

***Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.***

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Matt. 24:13*

It is a promise to perseverance, especially to such perseverance as is joined with fortitude. He that shall not be tempted to apostasy through the afflictions of the gospel, but shall patiently and courageously endure all the sufferings which shall follow the profession of the gospel, shall be saved; if not preserved, and so saved with a temporal salvation, yet he shall be eternally saved.