

## 6. Walking in the Light: Rejecting Antichrists (3Q 2009—Loved and Loving: John’s Epistles)

**Biblical material:** John 15:4-10; Acts 2:15-17; Heb. 1:1, 2; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4; 1 John 2:18-29; 4:1-6.

### Quotes

- Journey’s end in lovers meeting. *William Shakespeare*
- No man chooses evil because it is evil; he only mistakes it for happiness, the good he seeks. *Mary Wollstonecraft*
- No one ever suddenly became depraved. *Juvenal*
- Just are the ways of God, And justifiable to men. *John Milton*

### Questions

How do we recognize antichrists? How does the deception work? What is the fundamental issue here? What’s the problem in being sincerely wrong? What if we feel we have the truth? Is it any guarantee to trust in Christian leaders? If people are hostile towards us, does that prove we’re right? What brings eternal life?

### Bible discussion

How do people deny Christ and consequently become *anti-Christ*? At the most basic level, the answer is through lives led in opposition to him. That is at the heart of Lucifer’s decision—he wanted to be like God, yet live apart and in conflict with God. So too everyone who refuses God and his way. They are opposed to God. By their choosing to be in ignorance of him. By a direct denial of his claims. Even by Christians who claim to know him but do not allow him to change them from sinners into trustworthy friends of God. John is very pointed here—for this is such a vital aspect of truth. “Who, then, is the liar? It is anyone who says that Jesus is not the Messiah. Such a person is the Enemy of Christ—he rejects both the Father and the Son.” (1 John 2:22 TEV).

Why did John write like this? Because some of those he was writing to had strange ideas about Jesus and his divinity. Because of the old Greek idea that the physical world was naturally evil, they could not accept that Jesus was a real person—at least that God took on actual human form. So they suggested that Jesus only *seemed* real, or that Christ came down on a totally human Jesus at his baptism, or found some other way to get round the idea that God actually took on humanity. But as John sees so clearly, the incarnation *is* vital to the gospel. Any attempt to sideline this, or to make Jesus less than God would mean that he could not rightly represent God to us! His statements like “if you have seen me you have seen the Father” would then become invalid. And in Jesus’ death on the Cross, the answers about God would become totally questionable—only God can save, only God can sacrifice, only God can rise again.

John identifies the end-time in this development of opposition to God, echoing the words of Jesus himself, “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.” (Matthew 24:24 NIV).

But as we walk in the light, and reject antichrists and their untruth, we have eternal life (1 John 2:25). Of course, if this was an eternity with someone you didn’t care for, this would not be something to be desired. But because we know God through Christ now, we

can be completely confident of a wonderful eternal life in the presence of our loving Lord. In the words of Jesus: “Now this is eternal life: that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (John 17:3 NIV).

### **Comment**

Divisions over doctrine and practice will become ever more common as the End approaches. However the true Christian will hold onto the truth as found in Jesus. Denials over Christ and his divinity will be at the heart of many deceptions, but to follow such ideas would mean a false understanding of our loving Heavenly Father. So the message is “stand firm” and look forward to the soon return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And as the end approaches we will see an intensification of hostility to the gospel even within the church, and more groups who will claim some special insight or who want to do God’s work for Him in cleaning up the church. But separation demonstrates the true character of such a movement:

“...when a group separates itself into an elite, holier-than-thou huddle, claiming a deeper understanding or experience than other gospel people, beware. It will not be long before unbalanced teaching begins to lead its adherents away into undisguised error. Once the central truths of the faith are denied, the appetite for Christian fellowship is lost.” David Jackman, The Messages of John’s Letters (Leicester, England and Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 71.

### **Ellen White Comments**

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.—Letter 12, 1890. {2SM 56}

Impressions alone are not a safe guide to duty. The enemy often persuades men to believe that it is God who is guiding them, when in reality they are following only human impulse. But if we watch carefully, and take counsel with our brethren, we shall be given an understanding of the Lord’s will... {RH, August 24, 1911}.

I am afraid of anything that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid evidences of the truth as revealed in God’s Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come in as to set Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory and humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. {21MR 393}