

## 1 JOHN 2:22-23

Many adherents of New Age thinking make a basic mistake about the person of Jesus Christ. They believe that Jesus attained the “Christ Consciousness,” or an awareness of the inner divinity that lies within all people.

- 1 Christ = the Jewish Messiah.
- 2 Jesus is uniquely the Christ.
- 3 Warning of antichrist heresy.

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

### EXPLANATION

1. **Old Testament concept—Messiah or Christ:** Many New Agers claim that Jesus is not *the* Christ, but manifested the Christ *consciousness*.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the human person Jesus is distinguished from the Christ, which is thought to be an impersonal force, energy or principle. This consciousness, they say, is the realization of his inner divinity, which we all share, and an awareness to which we all can aspire. But this is wrong on several counts. Linguistically, the word Christ means “anointed one.” It comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word for “Messiah,” meaning God’s anointed one prophesied in the Old Testament. Further, in the Old Testament, the Messiah was portrayed not as a state of mind, abstract principle, energy, consciousness, or inner divinity, but as an individual person who would come and deliver his people from bondage (see Dan. 9:25-26). The Messiah would then reign forever on the throne of his ancestor, king David (Psalm 132:11; Jer. 33:17 cf. Lk. 1:31-32).
2. **Jesus uniquely the Christ:** There can only be one historical figure who fulfilled the many Old testament prophecies of the Messiah, and that person is Jesus of Nazareth, *the* Christ. Jesus was called the Christ from the moment of his birth (Luke 2:11), and the disciples referred to him as the Christ. For example, in John 1:41 we are told that after meeting Jesus, Andrew found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus saying, “We have found the Messiah (that is, the Christ).” When Jesus asked his disciples who they thought he was, Peter responded, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). Jesus fulfilled scores of Old Testament prophecies concerning his birth, ministry, death and resurrection. These predictions fit only one person in history, and were applied to Jesus of Nazareth uniquely as the fulfillment of the Messianic hope of Israel in the New Testament. Jesus is thus the “one of a kind” (Greek *monogenes*) Son of God, the unique self-revelation of God in human flesh, and not a mere prototype or model for human emulation in the discovery of alleged inner divinity.
3. **Antichrist false teaching:** Finally, John warns of false teaching prevalent in his day: the notion that Jesus is not the Christ. John probably had the Gnostics in mind when he wrote these words (see 1 John 4:2-3 and 2 John 7). The Gnostics, much like today’s New Age adherents, make an improper separation between Jesus and the Christ. John sounds a warning for those of any century who would deny Jesus is the Christ, calling this “antichrist” (meaning “in place of” or “against” Christ). In John’s theology, antichrist is probably best understood as both a doctrinal system of apostasy, as well as that manifested by individual apostates.<sup>2</sup> Those who follow such dangerous teachings, whether in the first century, or at the dawn of the twenty-first century, unwittingly deny both the Father and the Son.

Readers interested in a further study of biblical teachings on Christ in contrast to contemporary non-Christian perspectives, and an introductory study of the New Age movement, are encouraged to read two books by Douglas Groothuis. The first is *Jesus in an Age of Controversy*, available from Watchman Fellowship for a donation of \$14. The second is *Confronting the New Age*, available for a donation of \$12.

<sup>1</sup> For examples of this separation in New Age literature, see Annie Besant, *Esoteric Christianity* (Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1970), pp. 90-91, and Helene Crinne, *New Age Bible Interpretation* (Santa Monica, California: New Age Bible & Philosophy Center, 1961), p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> See Benjamin B. Warfield, “Antichrist,” in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, Vol. 1, ed. John E. Meeter (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970).

### KEY TO USING THIS PAGE

The biblical passage is highlighted in blue to indicate that this is a passage to which alternative religions use to support their unique teachings about Christ. The notes to the left of the passage can be written in the margins of a Bible to help explain the passage (however, do not write the numbers). The numbers correspond with the detailed explanations at the bottom of the page. These explanations help readers to fully understand the meaning of each marginal note.