False Teachers

2 John 1:7-13
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BIG BEND BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

2 John 1:1-6 Summary: Describes the importance of walking in the truth.

Applications from this passage…

- Truth and love are critical and must go together.
- We all need God's mercy and grace; thank you Jesus!
- Loving one another and obeying God is proof we are children of God.

2 John 1:7-9 – A warning about false teachers.
For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

Why did John warn about deceivers in the world?
John was aware false teachers were a danger to the church in his day.

- The immediate problem in [2 John] is that of traveling teachers or missionaries. According to Christian ethics all who thus traveled about were to be shown hospitality by Christians.

What were the deceivers in John's day?
John mainly had in mind the danger in his own time, of those who thought that Jesus, being God, could have no *real* connection with the material world.

- They said that He only had an *apparent* connection with the material world.

What was John's solution to combat Gnosticism?
We must *confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh*.

- This means Jesus came as a real man in His first coming.
- But it also means He will return as a human being; although glorified humanity added to His eternal deity.

How is it the deceivers denying the truth about Jesus are also antichrist?
Any false concept of who Jesus is must be from Satan, the enemy of God. False doctrines of Jesus are in the spirit of antichrist.

- antichrists are those who not only oppose Jesus, but also offer a substitute "Christ."

What is the significance of the *spirit of antichrist* that is *already in the world* (1 John 4:3)?
This spirit of opposition to God will one day find its ultimate fulfillment in the person of *the Antichrist*, who will lead humanity in an end-times rebellion against God.

Who is it who *does not have God*?
Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ: There is nothing noble, sincere, courageous, or admirable in a *false* Jesus.

- To deny the Biblical Jesus is *always* to reject the Father and the Son both.
- John here draws a critical line of truth, over which it is heresy to *transgress*.

What sort of modern denials of the biblical Jesus do we have today?
Today, there are "scholarly" denials of the deity of Jesus and the historical record of the Gospels.

- So, it is more important than ever to know who the true Jesus is according to the Bible and to love and serve the true Jesus.
- No one wants to hear, *"I never knew you"* (Matthew 7:23)

What is the problem with embracing Jesus but rejecting the Bible as being His inerrant Word?
This gives a person license to just make up who Jesus is and what He expects of us.

- To say *no* to God's way of revealing himself is to say *no* to God himself, for he will not let himself be known by men except on his own terms.

What is the significance of the word, *"transgresses"*?
The word *transgresses* has the idea of "going beyond a boundary."

- We never go "beyond" the teaching of Jesus, of who He is and what He has done for us.
- Anyone who thinks we have or should go beyond what the Bible plainly says about Jesus *transgresses*.

Does not going beyond the teaching of Jesus mean that we should only heed the red-letter text of the Bible?
People who think that do not understand the inspired nature of Scripture…

> 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

How do we show progress in the Chirstian life?
True progress in the Christian life is based upon a deeper knowledge of the historical, biblical Christ.

- Progress on any other ground may be called progress, but it is a progress that leaves God behind and is, therefore, not progress at all.

How should we regard some 'key' or new revelation to better understand the Bible?
When the teaching of the Bible needs to be supplemented by some 'key' or new revelation, it is a sure sign that some human contrived doctrine is being put forth.

What do people lose who depart from the biblical Jesus?
To depart from the true Jesus means you put yourself in jeopardy to lose the things the apostles and other faithful saints *worked for* (salvation of others, rewards in heaven).

- This reveals that it isn't enough for us to start out right, we must finish in faith to *receive a full reward*.

2 John 1:10-11 – Dealing with the false teachers.
If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

How should we deal with those teaching false doctrine?
If someone promotes a false doctrine of Jesus, John says we should give them no hospitality.

- To do so is to share *in his evil deeds*.
- We should have no religious connection with the false teacher, nor act towards him so as to induce others to believe you acknowledge him as a brother.

How should we treat Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses who promote a false Jesus?
Do not treat them as a fellow Christian.

- Instead, treat them as any other pagan; someone who needs to know Jesus as their Savior.

Are John's words not to show the false teacher any hospitality too severe?
These words sound severe, but John has not lost his love. We must consider these three points:

- John is not talking about *all* error, but only error which *masquerades* as true Christianity.
- John is not talking about all who *hold* the error which masquerades as true Christianity, but about those who *teach* those errors which masquerade as true Christianity.
- John is not talking about all *teachers* who err, but those who err in the most *fundamental* truths, and those who are active in spreading those fundamental errors.

Does this mean that we should have nothing to do with those who are caught up in the cults?
As John indicates, we should make a distinction between those who *teach* these Christ-denying doctrines (those who *bring this doctrine*) and those who merely *believe* the doctrines without trying to spread them.

Which house should we not allow false teachers to enter?
This may also be translated *do not receive him into the house*. John may be referring most specifically to not allowing these heretical teachers to come into *the house* where Christians meet together.

- It is not private hospitality which John is forbidding so much as an official welcome into the congregation, with the opportunity to spread his false teaching.
- We see how such [false] teachers were treated in the apostolic Church. They held no communion with them; afforded them no support, as *teachers*; but *did not persecute* them.

How is it that showing hospitality to false teachers share in their *evil deeds*?
We are defined by what we *reject* as much as by what we *accept*. In this, some are so *open minded* that they are *empty headed*.

- It is wise to keep an open mind on many things; but one would never keep an open mind about which poisons a person might try.
- You may say *yes* to all the right things; but must also say *no* to what is false and evil. We need to become good at rejecting what should be rejected.

Who was not to receive hospitality in John's day?
The religious leaders who claimed to be advanced, progressive thinkers.

- The Gnostic teachers of the time were claiming that while the gospel of the historic Jesus might be all very well for unenlightened people, they had a more profound understanding (secret knowledge).

Who should not receive hospitality in modern times?
In the late 19th Century, the rise of theological liberalism brought forth generations of Christian pastors, leaders, and theologians who denied many of the fundamentals of Biblical Christianity.

- Theological liberalism thought that Christianity had to re-evaluate all its doctrines in the light of modern science, philosophy, and reasoning.
- They rejected the idea that a doctrine was true simply because the Bible taught it; it also had to be proved true by reason and experience.
- They believed that the Bible was not inspired by God, but the work of men who were limited by the ignorance and superstitions of their time.

For theological liberals, the Bible was not either inspired or supernatural.

- The importance of the Bible was not in its literal or historical truth, but in its changing spiritual message interpreted through the lens of the culture.

2 John 1:12-13 – John anticipates a future visit.
Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

Why did John hope to see those he wrote to in person?
Communicating face to face is always far superior than through letters (or as we'd say in our day, texts).

- We must generally sympathize with John's preference for personal, face to face communication rather than the writing of letters — though we are thankful for this letter.

Who is this *elect sister*?
Telling us that the *elect lady* (2 John 1) has an *elect sister*, and that they both have *children* does little to identify with certainty who John is writing to.

- Perhaps all it tells us is that if John used the term *elect lady* as a symbol for the (saying that she has a sister and children).
- The most likely idea is that the *elect lady* (a particular church) had an *elect sister* — other "sister" churches from which John brings a greeting.

What is the point of being reminded there are sister churches after the warning about false teachers?
Though we must be on guard against false teachers, the true followers of Jesus are more than just our group.

- If we allow our desire to defend the truth to make us unloving and intolerant, Satan has won a victory.

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- False teachers have an unbiblical doctrine of Christ.
- False teachers are in the spirit of antichrist.
- False teachers should not be shown Christian hospitality.