

Anarchy (Pt. 2): The Destructionist's Heretical Denial

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The first article discussed how the Destructionists have caused chaos and a “reign of terror” in society, governments, civility, religious institutions and even in the Lord’s Church. This devilish destruction is led by those who are governed by anarchy—they respect no laws and honor no boundaries:

- They are “the law” to themselves and each does what is right in his own eyes.
- They cynically scoff at any Rule of Law (especially in the spiritual matters).
- They show extreme contempt for any Rule of law that sets boundaries that they do not like.
- They terrorize and bully elderships who seek to honor and follow God’s Rule of Law.

The focus of the Destructionist is that of a person determined to “deconstruct” the existing framework that sets boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable behavior and beliefs and “reconstruct” the beliefs and organization.

The anecdotal evidence of the Destructionist in civil issues is evident in history’s darkest pages. The anecdotal evidence of the Destructionist in spiritual issues is tragically repeated throughout civilization’s history.

Sadly, there have always been those who refused to honor God’s spiritual boundaries and conform to God’s spiritual commands. Their damnable heresies have constantly split, splintered and divided the Lord’s People. The term “heresy” often connotes the idea of a doctrine that flagrantly violates God’s revealed doctrines. But the Greek term from which we get the word “heresy” describes an action that is different from

the generally held connotation. This actual meaning is critical to our present discussion.

Titus 3:10 is given this translation: “A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject” (KJV); “A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse” (ASV; NASB).

In Titus 3 Inspiration is describing the personality of the “Destructionist” in Crete.

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It is interesting that “man” (Titus 3:10) is the term for “mankind” and thus includes both genders. There have been some extremely factious females who thought this did not apply to them because of the translation of *anthropos* by our gender specific “man.” The point is clear! Any member of the local congregation can become a factious leader (Hebrews 12:14ff).

The term “factious” is interesting and this is the only text where it is used in the New Testament. It is from the Greek αἰρετικός (*hairetikos*) from which we derive our English term “heretic.” Hence the translation in the King James Version as “heretick.”

Paul is saying that those who allow opinions to fuel opposition to the governing beliefs and behaviors that are

commanded and consistent with the Holy Scriptures are “heretics” in God’s Church.

This Greek term refers to an opinionated propagandist who promotes dissension by his stubbornness. This term has evolved in our common language to refer to one who upholds factious doctrines contrary to sound doctrine. The evolution of the term is understandable as the process of factionalism is considered. The factious (heretical) person begins voicing opposition and disagreement within the congregation. This voiced disagreement is fueled by anarchy’s temptation and fed by pride. It becomes stronger and searches for support from other members. It is relentless in seeking to deconstruct the prevailing pattern of belief and behavior and replace the old with anarchy’s new beliefs and behaviors.

Soon the Devil provides the occasion for several that share the factious feelings to become associated together. In their criticizing clique the faction’s anarchy becomes more entrenched.

Ultimately battle lines are drawn. Eventually the solidarity of the godly eldership is breached and the fellowship is fractured.

Seeking to validate its rebellion to God’s structured authority, the factious group begins to justify its criticism of the eldership. Inevitably the factious group must show the elders were scripturally wrong or they have to admit they have split the local congregation over foolish questions. Their pride then compels them to discover “fresh” ideas on old doctrines and begin saying that the elders’ prior decisions are unscriptural.

A doctrinal separation evolves and the factious group begins teaching/preaching a different doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3; 6:3). Consequently, the “different doctrine”

has divided God's People into factions and a "heresy" is present.

What began as a simple difference of opinion was manipulated by anarchy's arrogance and became a damnable doctrine. One whose stubborn, opinionated words are spoken to show how wrong the elders are in their decisions is literally (in the Greek) a "heretic." What a frightful conclusion!

"A heretic is a man of contumacious spirit, self-willed, and contending for his own theories, though they are opposed and contradictory to the universally received doctrines of the Church and the unmistakable revelations of the word of God...We cannot help a man who refuses the kindest suggestions, and to be controlled by anything but his own wild, ungovernable temper" (Barlow, 103).

The factious person (heretic) is the member in the congregation who becomes upset with the eldership and in his self-will thinks he is right and the elders are wrong. Then a campaign is commenced by which he goes from person to person in the congregation striving to win support and sympathy. Members are confronted by this person and forced to make a choice: "Will you agree with me that I'm right and the elders are wrong?" (See Galatians 5:20; Hebrews 12:14ff.)

Such a diabolical pattern was foretold as wrecking ruin within local congregations as the governing eldership would compromise God's absolute Rule of Law—"from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

The result of casting aside God's Rule of Law in spiritual belief and behavior is frighteningly summarized by this devilish characterization—it is HERESY! All who seek to turn away from God's governing of belief and behavior, as taught in the Bible, are HERETICS and they face a DAMNABLE destiny!

Among the many verses that establish this conclusion as absolute Truth is Inspiration's somber caution: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house,

and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (2 John 9-11).

The basic issue involved—fellowship IS limited by "the doctrine of Christ"

The basic root of this evil spiritual anarchy is found in the Garden's account (see Part One). However The Satan has tenaciously persisted throughout mankind's civilization to urge the rejection of God's Rule of Law and the exaltation of man's wisdom (See 1 Corinthians 2:1-16). This is evidenced by even a casual reading of the Scriptures. Many have been tempted with and succumbed to the devilish cunning to reject God's commands and replace them with man's modified beliefs and behaviors.

This anarchic attack upon the Rule of Law is not restricted to spiritual beliefs and behaviors but is sadly evident first in culture then in the Church. When the Rule of Law in a society is ignored then it will soon follow that the Rule of Law in the Lord's Church will be ignored.

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This truth is demonstrated in the anarchy that has cancerously invaded the Church today. Many today are very willing to cast aside the old paths without even considering why they should be followed (Jeremiah 6:16, 17).

The manner by which the old is cast aside and anarchy is enthroned varies. Some do it with an outright blasphemous rejection saying they "will not follow" what the Bible

teaches. They attempt a weak justification of such blasphemy by saying the Bible is antiquated and not applicable to modern society.

Others attempt a path of rejection that is not as obvious in their anarchy. They attempt to offer "insight" and "reinterpretations" of Scripture that will justify their self-willed blasphemy (Peter characterized such as "wresting" the Scriptures 2 Peter 3:16. The interesting point to observe here is that even in Peter's day there were anarchists attempting to change the clear commands of God. The Greek term used is στρεβλώω and refers to the form of torture by the rack in which the victim's body was twisted and broken. This term is used figuratively to communicate the idea that these spiritual anarchists were not content to accept the simple commands of God and so they "twisted" or "broke" the body of teaching. A suitable term to translate this meaning is they "pervert" or "wrest" the Scriptures to their own ideas).

The twisting of Scripture in recent times is abundantly evident. I cannot think of one doctrine of the New Testament that has not been attacked and perverted by the blasphemous tortuous twisting of the Destructionists/Anarchists/Change Agents.

One of the "new" discoveries of the Destructionists in recent times has been the teaching that there is a difference between what God commanded in the First Century and what He commands now. Or, put in another form, what the essentials (core teachings) are that God requires. According to this interpretation of the Destructionist, God's Bible has some commands/doctrines that apply to the Christian that are non-negotiable and other things that are on the periphery and inconsequential. The Destructionists take this valid point and apply it to efforts to reject binding doctrine and fashion their own Rule of Law.

They deliberately ignore valid biblical commands insisting they have the spiritual enlightenment to veto God's commanded essentials and follow only their commanded essentials.

The text under consideration in this article (2 John 9-11) is the flashpoint for those wishing to go beyond what is written or those wishing to wrest the Scriptures to permit their blasphemous repudiation of God's governing Law.

This is not some new “discovery” by the Anarchists. This issue has historically been exposed as false doctrine by the first century context in which John wrote to our current calendars.

The focus of the controversy is the simple phrase “the doctrine of Christ.” It focuses upon two queries. “Is this the doctrine ABOUT Christ?” (His incarnation). Or, “Is this the doctrine OF Christ?” (His teachings requisite upon His followers).

The Destructionists/Anarchist attempts to make the argument that the prohibition in fellowship applies only to those who deny Christ is the incarnate Son of God. They see tests of fellowship limited to a litmus test regarding the Savior’s deity. Thus, according to the Progressive Destructionist, if anyone believes that Jesus is the Christ then he must be fellowshipped regardless of other beliefs or behaviors he demonstrates. According to this position there are no other boundaries of fellowship. This point is emphatically maintained because the Destructionist/Anarchist wishes to change or deny Christ’s doctrines in regard to salvation, worship, the exclusiveness of His Church, and life style choices. To the Anarchists, if one believes that Christ is the Son of God then there is no reason why fellowship should be restricted. So the Anarchist limits fellowship but his limits are those that allow anything except outright denial of Christ’s humanity.

Thus, fellowship IS limited by “the doctrine of Christ.” But the perplexity that is presented is asking “WHAT IS the doctrine of Christ that limits fellowship?”

This dilemma is not that perplexing. The issue is not that confused.

There is only a problem with 2 John 9-11 if one seeks to justify his Destructionist Anarchy in the local congregation. The justification sought to discard the commands of God, respecting beliefs and behaviors, is the perplexity ONLY of those seeking to justify a torturous twisting of God’s Holy Scriptures!

Look at the below points and see the clarity of God’s Word and the blasphemous confusion and self-contradictions of spiritual anarchy.

Our late brother G. K. Wallace offers an amazing insight into the issue we are examining. In 1963 he delivered a series of lectures at the West End church of Christ

in St. Louis, MO. The focus of these lectures was the teaching of W. Carl Ketcherside who was advocating an all-inclusive, none distinctive form of “Christianity” that later led him to establish the “Oak Hill Church” in St. Louis (a community church and not a New Testament Church). Brother Wallace’s observations are based upon the unchanging Truth of God’s Word and, consequently are as pertinent today as in 1963! (*A Critical Review of a New (Old) Modernism and a Plea for Unity: A review of W. Carl Ketcherside*). Listen to his observations that have a remarkable bearing on our current discussion.

“Here is the basis of unity as revealed in the New Testament. In Acts 2:42 and 43...The early church based fellowship on continuing in what the apostles taught. They had not only received what the apostles taught, they stayed in it. They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine. The apostles’ doctrine included breaking of bread, prayer, the Lord’s Supper, and only vocal music. In 1 Corinthians 14:37 Paul says... They continued in the apostles’ doctrine, which included right conduct, right worship, prayer, the breaking of bread.

“Not only that, if they continued in the apostles’ doctrine, they had fellowship with each other. John says in 1 John 1:3...They say fellowship is only with Christ, but John says it is also with us. ‘Yea and our...We have a fellowship not only with God, but with one another and with his son, Jesus Christ.’ Verse 6...Fellowship according to God, Christ and the Holy Spirit is walking in the light, walking in the truth, and walking after the commandments. Let me read another passage from 11 John, ‘I rejoice’...Jesus said, ‘Thy word’...(John 17:17). The truth of God is the word of Christ. New Testament fellowship is built upon walking in the light, walking in the truth, and John says, ‘walking in the truth as we received commandment.’ It is a fellowship based upon keeping the commandments of Christ, ‘And I beseech thee’...Thus, the basis of fellowship is continuing, not just starting in the apostles’ doctrine.

“What is the basis of fellowship? It is walking in the light, walking in the truth, and walking after the commandments. Then watch this climax: ‘Whosoever goeth onward’... John says whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teachings of Christ hath not God.

“Now here in 11 John 9, is the only serious effort that these brethren make toward the establishment of their theory. They say that the only basis of Christian unity is the acceptance of the deity of Christ. When a man ‘goeth onward and abideth not in the teachings of Christ,’ they say that means they merely reject the deity of Christ. The real question then is does the phrase ‘abideth not in the teachings of Christ’ have reference simply to the deity of Christ, or to the doctrine or teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible?”

Wallace’s words are indeed remarkable to our current situation!

Alan Highers offers a perceptive comment stating: “Some simply do not want to believe that Christ’s doctrine is binding, especially with regard to some of their practices and ideas. To ‘get around’ 11 John 9, they simply limit ‘the doctrine of Christ’ to what they regard as basic teaching about Christ—that He took on the robe of flesh and came into this world. So long as one believes this basic truth, he ‘hath both the Father and the Son.’ In this way they can justify, rationalize, and have fellowship with all their denominational friends and colleagues and the pastor down the street who has never been immersed. They want to travel the broad way and choose the easy path instead of doing the hard work of searching the scriptures and abiding in the doctrine of Christ” (47).

The application of this wrested text is today being applied not only to the removal of the lines of exclusive fellowship between God’s Church and the churches of the world, but it is now being used in a contrived way to applaud, encourage, and permit fellowship with those participating in sins. There are those who have arisen echoing the immoral verbiage of the pro-homosexual propaganda saying that if a practicing homosexual comes then he must be received as a saved brother in the Lord IF he believes that Christ was God’s

incarnate Son! Some congregations even have appointed “couples” as Deacons in the Church. Carefully note that this egregious inclusion of the practicing homosexuals is only a logical consequence to the twisting of 2 John 9-11 that permits an inclusive fellowship based only on the deity of Christ.

So the root of this issue is identified.

The consequences of redefining “the doctrine of Christ” are far-reaching. Such will ultimately result in the overthrow of EVERY condition of fellowship and the erasure of every boundary guarding fellowship that is to maintain “holy living”!

If one is not authorized by God’s governing doctrines to judge what is right and what is wrong, then how can one obey Ephesians 5:17?

Upon what basis does one “reprove” and how can we determine what “unrighteousness” is and what distinguishes between “evil” and “good.”

Even the demons “believe” that Christ is the Son of God. But we are not to be joined with those who do evil (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). So if belief in the incarnation is the only criterion governing fellowship then God has placed Christians in an impossible position and this contradiction proves that such a One CANNOT be God!

The revisionary script for “the doctrine of Christ” is thus exposed as an evil addition or subtraction of God’s Holy Truth! (Revelation 22:19).

CONSIDER THE GREEK GRAMMAR OF 2 JOHN 9-11

This point is not readily recognized but clearly resolves the issue. This question involves the consideration of several intricate points of Greek.

The expression “doctrine of Christ” is the translation of the Greek expression *tei didachei tou Christou*. *Tou Christou* is the genitive case connected with the preceding *tei didachei*. The nature of this construction is the point at issue. Inasmuch as *tou Christou* is a genitive case, some explanation to the genitive case in general and in this verse must be given.

Robertson’s Grammar discusses the genitive case with this remark, “It is the specifying case...This is the basic idea of the case, but in what way does it specify in

II John 9? To understand this, one must notice that the genitive case can be used in connection with a preceding noun; in II John 9 the noun being ‘doctrine,’ *didache*. When so connected with a noun or substantive, the genitive case can denote possession, describe or define” (Wallace, 49-50).

Thus the term “doctrine of Christ” refers to the doctrine possessed, defined or specified by Christ.

The genitive case can be in the “objective” or “subjective.” In light of the current efforts of the Destructionist’s to deconstruct God’s Rule of Law and reconstruct his anarchistic rule of Law, these two terms must be understood.

It is not the doctrine ABOUT Christ but the doctrine FROM Christ!

The term “substantive” is defined by Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, page 78, in these words: “We have the subjective genitive when the noun in the genitive produces the action, being therefore related as subject to the verbal idea of the noun modified.”

The term “objective” is defined by the same writers on the same page. We have this construction, (objective genitive), when the noun in the genitive receives the action, being thus related as object to the verbal idea in the noun modified.

Remember the noun is “doctrine.”

So how does this insight from the Greek grammar help us understand “the doctrine of Christ” in 2 John 9-11? Brother Wallace observes, “In the case of II John 9, the issue thus is: Is the expression ‘of Christ’ subjective or objective genitive? Thus did Christ produce the action of the noun ‘teaching’ subjective; or is the object of the ‘teaching’ objective? With this set before you, I wish now to call your attention to the voice of scholarship in regard to this. Mr. Brooke Foss Westcott, co-editor of *Westcott and Hort’s Greek Testament* says; ‘in the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine which Christ brought, and which He brought first in His own person, and then through his followers (Heb. 2:3). This sense seems better than the doctrine of (concerning) the Christ, and the usage of

the New Testament is uniformly in favor of it. Revelation 2:14 & 15; John 18:19; Acts 2:42.” (Wallace, 50).

Brother Wallace proceeds to give a lengthy list and quotes from renowned Greek scholars and grammarians showing that the “genitive objective” is the only proper interpretation.

The fact that “the doctrine of Christ” is the genitive objective will be shown later in this article to prove incontrovertible proof that John is referencing the “doctrines taught/binding by Christ” upon His Church.

The conclusion noted from this discussion of the Greek grammar is that this passage (2 John 9-11) teaches that the “doctrine” in view is that doctrine which has Christ as its author and is not teaching concerning the deity of Christ.

To maintain that this verse focuses upon the incarnation of Christ assumes a position that contradicts the best authorities on the meaning of the Greek New Testament. It is a position that arrogates to itself a spiritual anarchy that “twists” or “perverts” the simple teaching of the Scripture.

Those seeking to evade the spiritual Rule of Law, that sets boundaries and restricts fellowship to those who follow the doctrine (beliefs and behaviors) taught by Christ, His Apostles and the pen of Inspiration, expose their blasphemous attitude of anarchy and their destructionist agenda by saying the “doctrine OF Christ” does not mean the prescribed beliefs and behaviors commanded in the Bible. They stand in an inexcusable position!

Complementing G. K. Wallace’s study is the following observation from brother Guy N. Woods (267-268).

“It is the doctrine which Christ personally, and through his disciples, taught—the message of salvation. It most certainly signifies the doctrine which Christ originated and propagated through his chosen representatives.

“As the ‘doctrine of Balaam’ was the doctrine which Balaam taught (Revelation 2:14), so ‘the doctrine of Christ’ is the doctrine which Christ taught either personally or through agency. This is the uniform usage of the New Testament. See for example, John 18:19; Luke 4:32; Mark 11:18 and Matthew 22:33. These allusions to ‘his

doctrine,' make clear the significance of the phrase, 'the doctrine of Christ.' Thus, the words, 'doctrine of Christ,' simply mean 'the doctrine which is Christ's'—that body of teaching for which Christ is responsible.

Only those who want a wider fellowship than the teaching (doctrine) of Christ permits have ever argued otherwise. It is significant that the word 'transgresseth' in this passage derives from a Greek word (proago) whence comes our English word 'progressive.' Thus literally, 'Whosoever becomes progressive and abides not in the doctrine of Christ has not God.'

"Some rejoice in their progressive stance in religion; but the real choice is between God and errorists. To fellowship those who teach false doctrine is to lose one's fellowship with God.

"Religionists often boast of their progressiveness in religion, and movements in and out of the church have risen based on the concept of progressiveness.

"Progress is proper only when it is in the direction of Christ; and in some matters it is infinitely better to be non-progressive, particularly in not going beyond what the Lord has said.

"John makes clear that any movement which is away from the teaching of Christ is progress in the wrong direction, and results in the loss of God himself. We must ever be on guard against any semblance of departure from 'the doctrine of Christ'—his teaching as set out in the New Testament."

It is significant that Inspiration chose one unique term to identify those who blasphemously cast aside God's commanded belief and behaviors—the word chosen is progressive" progressive (παρβαίνω—parabainō).

How disturbing is the thought that those who are pushing the Destructionist/Anarchist agenda today take great pride in becoming "progressive." They boast in the very word that communicates damnation! Is this single fact not enough to convict those of grievous error as they are seeking to deconstruct the old paths and reconstruct the new progressive changes in the local congregations?

Brother Dave Miller observes, "Another passage sometimes used to foster fellowship with the denominations is verse nine of Second John. The expression 'doctrine of Christ:' has typically been taken to mean the entirety of Christian doctrine (known in Greek as the subjective genitive). Consequently, fellowship is not to be extended to those who deviate on any point of Christ's doctrine. Those promoting change in the church insist, however, that 'doctrine of Christ' refers specifically and exclusively to the single doctrine about Christ (objective genitive) that some were denying, namely, that Christ had come in the flesh. They reason that the only basis upon which fellowship between Christians may be disrupted is when an individual denies the incarnation or person of Jesus. They say fellowship should not be breached on other matters such as the use of instrumental music in worship, women preachers, etc." (301).

"The overwhelming verdict of scholarship in that the phrase "doctrine of Christ" in the ninth verse of Second John refers to the whole of Christian doctrine." (Miller, 301).

"Regardless of what other men say, what evidence exists within the Bible itself to assist in understanding the meaning of the expression 'doctrine of Christ'? The term *didache* is used thirty times in the New Testament. The most common subjective genitive form is 'the doctrine of him,' i.e. 'his doctrine' (cf 'my doctrine' and 'your doctrine'). The 'doctrine of Christ' also parallels 'the doctrine of the apostles': (Acts 2:42) and 'the doctrine of the Lord' (Acts 13:12). The same subjective genitive is seen in the expressions 'the doctrine of the Pharisees and Scribes' (Matt. 16:12), 'the doctrine of Balaam' (Rev. 2:14) and 'the doctrine of the Nicolaitans' (Rev. 2:15). These latter two are further instances of the use of the subjective genitive specifically in John's writings. All of these examples parallel the expression 'doctrine of Christ' and refer to the totality of teaching what the person taught" (Miller, 303-304).

"As suggested in some of the foregoing comments, the construction of objective genitive (the doctrine about Christ rather than the doctrine which Christ taught) seems to be contrived to fit the theology of the proponent rather than to fit the context of John's epistles" (Highers, 47).

CONSIDER THE CONTEXT OF 2 JOHN 9-11

Christian fellowship is the most powerful force in Christianity. It maintains boldness and assurance. It encourages and edifies. It portends the environment of Heaven's splendor. It encourages steadfast loyalty, devotion and obedience to God's Rule of Law.

The fellowship that binds the Lord's Church together in strength, unity and loyalty can also be a factor that brings destruction to the congregation. The Church cannot fellowship those who are false teachers because they bring into the congregation beliefs and behaviors that compromise and weaken the congregation's strength. These become as leaven and lead to the destruction of the faith that others have. False teaching has historically been shown to produce actions by which people move away from God. The false teachers stir up parties and factions that lead to divisions (hence they are heretics—see the above notes).

The failure to maintain loyalty to God's doctrine has historically proven destructive. Thus the warning: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice" (Exodus 23:2). And again: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30).

The Epistles of John were written to guard the bond of fellowship that God has designed for His Church. There are several repeated expressions in these Epistles. Perhaps the term that is focused upon more than others in John's Epistles is the word "love." For this reason many commentaries on these Epistles includes the word "love."

The sacred fellowship guarding the Lord's Church is indeed governed by "love." The First Epistle stresses the fact that the brotherhood of believers is demonstrated by love of one to another. The Second and Third Epistles stress the fact that the fellowship of believers is guarded by a love of the Truth.

A critical contextual fact in John's Epistles is that fellowship must be maintained by the love that brethren show to one another AND by the love that brethren show in obeying the Truth of God. It is NOT a sign of Christian love to tolerate either acts of bitterness, ignorance of brethren's needs, or false teachers. These are shown by John to be elements of evil that corrupts God's Church.

In fact, it is a sign of a LACK (or absence) of love to permit or turn a blind eye to the teachers seeking to bring in damnable doctrines. Using Truth to refute the false teacher is not the act of a hateful person but the conduct of a loving friend.

Brother Jimmy Jividen accurately observes, "Condoning false teachers in the church is not a sign of tolerance and love. It is a sign of the compromising fear of men and a blatant disrespect for the authority of Christ" (98).

The immediate context of John's Epistles can be summarized as Inspiration's warning against three devilish temptations that will destroy God's Church:

- First John—Avoid false love
- Second John—Avoid false teachers
- Third John—Avoid false gospels (messages)

A very good summary of the contextual elements of 2 John 9-11 is offered in this analysis:

"The theme of John's second letter is false love and false doctrine. In the first letter John has shown that the love of the brethren was a vital principle of Christianity. In the second letter, he explains that true love does not condone nor encourage false doctrine. Love must be in truth. Christians are bound to one another by the special bond of truth. Truth is the basis of Christian love. John stresses this by the fact that he mentions the word "truth" four times in the first three verses. Christians do not love each other because they are drawn together by fleshly ties or social standing, but because of the truth they have in common. Christians are bound together in love because objective truth teaches it. Truth is a spiritual force which abides within (verse 2). It is a continuing principle which directs because it will remain forever. Love as an abiding principle remains among brethren as

long as truth endures; thus Christian love is founded upon the truth" (Camp, 230).

In the history of the Lord's Church there have been those who did not like to be bound by the "doctrines" of the New Testament (those commands of Christ, communicated by the Apostles, and inscribed by pens of Inspiration).

The prominent false doctrine that John addressed was Gnosticism. This philosophy denied the basic elements of New Testament Christianity. It stressed that the fleshly environment was inconsequential to one's spiritual relationship with God. In fact it was repulsed that any material (earthly/worldly) factors had any bearing to one's spirituality. Thus they would tolerate any worldly behavior saying that the fleshly has nothing to do with the spiritual—it was a philosophy that granted freedom for fleshly indulgences. Such fittingly illustrates anarchy in its clearest form. So determined were the Gnostics to follow this evil that they denied our Lord came in a fleshly body.

The Gnostic heresy (factious dividing by unscriptural belief and practice) was compromising the brethren to whom John wrote his general epistles. John's Epistles challenged this error and silenced its advocacy.

In his First Epistle John points out the error of Gnostic beliefs showing that Christ was indeed on earth in a fleshly body that could be touched. The First Epistle continues to show that one must be involved in the earthly affairs of others because that is what true love does. You

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simply cannot divorce the earthly from the spiritual—what you do on earth impacts the spiritual (You cannot say you love God and fail to demonstrate this love on earth).

First John stresses this fact...Anarchy does not allow you to hate you brother. Earthly

relationships have an absolute impact upon the spiritual relationships.

In his Second Epistle John points out that "love" cannot be permitted to condone compromise in behaviors and beliefs. In order for earthly behavior to compliment spiritual beliefs and behaviors, then one must obey the prescribed commands (doctrines). If one refuses to follow the prescribed commands (doctrines) then that prevents the spiritual relationship.

Second John stresses the fact...Anarchy does not allow you to pick and choose which doctrines you will follow. Earthly beliefs and behaviors have an absolute impact upon the spiritual relationships.

In his Third Epistle John points out that no matter how alluring other gospels may seem, they must not be permitted. The one true Message of God has been "once for all delivered" and stands as the foundation of earthly and spiritual belief and behaviors!

Third John stresses the fact...Anarchy does not permit you to treat the Inspired Word of God with callous indifference and follow another Rule of Law. Earthly governing of spiritual beliefs and behaviors has an absolute Rule of Law that has an absolute impact upon spiritual relationships.

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"John dealt with the error of those who claimed they had no sin (1 Jn. 1:8-10), he rebuked those who said they could know Christ without obeying his commandments (1 Jn. 2:4), he condemned those who hated their brethren while pretending to walk in the light (1 Jn. 2:9-11). In other words, the denial that Jesus came in the flesh is not the only false doctrine that John contrasted with the doctrine of Christ. It is fiction to assert that John was only warning and admonishing about whether Jesus came in the flesh" (Highers, 46).

Brother Highers continues saying,

"Further, take a look at other expressions John uses in his second epistle along with his reference to 'the doctrine of Christ.' He speaks of 'the

truth,' 'have known the truth,' 'the truth's sake,' 'in truth and love,' and 'walking in truth' (II Jn. 1-4). He refers to 'a commandment from the Father,' 'walk after his commandments,' 'this is the commandment' (II Jn. 4-6). Consider these together:

(1) John speaks of 'the truth' (verses 1-4)

(2) He speaks of 'the commandments' (verses 4-6)

(3) He follows, then, with a reference to 'the doctrine of Christ' (verses 9-10)

"If one has regard for the contextual surroundings of the passage under consideration, he would have to recognize the connection between 'the truth,' 'the commandments,' and 'the doctrine of Christ.' It is clear that the terms are used together in such a brief epistle to denote the same idea—namely, the body of truth taught and revealed by the Lord.

"These expressions certainly include more than the fact of Jesus coming in the flesh. The whole context of II John 9 weighs heavily against the conclusion that John intends to refer not only to 'the doctrine of Christ,' but to 'the doctrine, truth, and commandments' which Jesus taught" (Highers, 46).

Brother Jimmy Jividen accurately observes this truth regarding the consequences of limiting the immediate context of 2 John 9-11 only to the incarnation of Christ.

"If John were teaching that the only criterion for fellowship is confessing that Jesus came in the flesh, some serious theological problems would follow.

If such an understanding is correct, then one must have fellowship with demons. They are believers in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17).

If such an understanding is correct, then one has fellowship with those whom Jesus does not know. The non-doers of God's will are not recognized by Jesus as being His disciples (Ephesians 5:27).

If such an understanding is correct, then one must have fellowship with those God does not know. Those who claim to know Him but refuse to keep His commandments are liars. No matter how emotional their claim, refusal to keep His commandments and His word

alienates one from God (Matthew 21:12, 13).

"Condoning false teachers in the church is not a sign of tolerance and love. It is a sign of the compromising fear of men and a blatant disrespect for the authority of Christ" (Jividen, 98)

The immediate context shows that "the doctrine of Christ" refers to the totality of the teachings, commands, and doctrine which originated with the Lord's teachings and was transmitted to the Apostles by the Holy Spirit and to the world through Inspiration's writings in the Bible.

"The word 'doctrine' is used twice in II John 9, 10: First, 'whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God.' And second, 'whosoever abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son.'" Whatever 'the doctrine of Christ' means in the first part of the passage, it means in the latter. If the first allusion to 'the doctrine of Christ' refers only to his coming in the flesh, and one who abides not in this doctrine 'hath not God,' then all that one in the latter part of the passage must do to have both the Father and the Son is to abide in the doctrine that Christ came in the flesh. This would amount to salvation by faith only" (Highers, 47).

God NEVER considers the possibility of a religious unity with each holding to different beliefs and behaviors. The only way unity is possible is if all follow the same directions found in "the doctrine of Christ." Only those following God's directions contribute to unity—those unwilling to follow God's directions and who "go beyond" these directions have no part in our fellowship.

The remote context offers strong support for the conclusions derived from the immediate context.

The tragedy that John 9-11 addresses is that teachers/leaders had come into the

congregation with a "different" belief and behavior doctrine. John labels them as "deceivers" (verse 7) because they sought to present their "new" doctrines as the doctrine delivered by Christ. These had become "progressive" in their efforts to redefine and rethink the doctrine of Christ which commands specific beliefs and behaviors. The severity of confronting these "progressives" is bluntly stated. They are going to harm the Church so brethren have the obligation to preempt the intrusion and refuse the redefined doctrines.

How does the remote context of Scriptures confirm this principle of confronting false teaching?

God expects His People to judge teachers and doctrines and test them (Matthew 7:15-20; 1 John 4:1). Upon what Rule of Law are these to be tested? The Rule of Law that decides these matters is the "doctrine of Christ." If one interprets this as meaning only belief in the incarnation of Christ then we are without any criterion to judge/test any other spiritual belief or behavior! How would one say any behavior is wrong as long as the one coming professes to accept the incarnation of Christ?

God expects His People to confront and expose beliefs and behavior that is contrary to His commands (Ephesians 5:3-11). But by what Rule of Law are we to do this if "the doctrine of Christ" does not refer to His commands, teachings and doctrines of belief and behavior?

God expects His People to be able to discern when the Scriptures are "wrested" and avoid the false teaching (2 Peter 3:16; Romans 16:18; 1 Timothy 1:20; 5:20; 2 Timothy 4:10). But how can Christians "discern" what is false if the only standard is one's belief in the incarnation of Christ.

God expects His People to renounce and abstain from all works of evil (Galatians 6:16-21; 1 Corinthians 3:9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Romans 1:29-32). But upon what authority can Christians do this if they do not have an absolute Rule of Law that applies to all? According to the Progressives anyone coming into a congregation must be welcomed and accepted as a partner as long as he believes in the incarnation. This invites the congregation to be populated by all manner of sin and immorality!

God expects His People to “abide in Christ’s Word” (John 8:31, 32). But how can Christians do this if there is only one absolute criterion and that only addresses His incarnation and not the words, teachings, commands, and truth that He taught?

God expects His People not to become “partakers of other men’s sins” (1 Timothy 5:22). But how is this possible if the only “sin” is the denial of Christ’s incarnation?

Once again brother Franklin Camp has insight offering clarity to the remote context this passage:

“The Bible is its own commentary. The New Testament explains the meaning of doctrine. Notice a few passages, ‘And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine’ (Matthew 7:28).

“The sayings of Jesus are called doctrine. What were the sayings of Jesus referred to? The reference is the entire sermon in chapters 5, 6 and 7. This whole sermon is called doctrine. Is the sermon limited to the teaching about Christ? The sermon contains the teaching of Christ. Here are a few things contained in the sermon, ‘The Beatitudes, adultery, divorce, love, prayer, heavenly treasures, earthly treasures, anxiety, false teaching, doing the will of God, hearing and doing.’

“All of these subjects and others are included in the sermon and are called doctrine. Whose doctrine was it? Christ was the preacher; therefore it must follow that the sermon contains the doctrine of Christ. The ones that insist that the doctrine of Christ means only doctrine about Christ must reject the Sermon on the Mount since it’s called doctrine and as Christ was the Teacher, it is the doctrine of Christ.

“Christ warned his disciples of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Was he trying to convince his disciples of the being of the Pharisees and Sadducees? Or was he warning of their teaching?

“In 1 Timothy 4:1 Paul speaks of the doctrine of devils. Is Paul discussing the doctrine about devils or is he speaking of the doctrine that had its origin with devils? Two of the doctrines are mentioned in verse 3.

“The doctrine of Balaam is mentioned in Revelation 2:14. There cannot be any question as to the meaning of the doctrine of Balaam. ‘But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.’

“The doctrine of Balaam was what Balaam taught. These are only a few of the passages in the New Testament that interpret the meaning of the phrase the doctrine of. The doctrine of Christ was the teaching of Christ (Matthew 7:28). The doctrine of devils was not doctrine about devils, but their teaching. The doctrine of Balaam was not doctrine about Balaam, but what he taught.

“In the light of these passages, what is the doctrine of Christ in II John 9-11? It is the teaching of Christ and the teaching of Christ through the apostles.

“Fellowship involves doctrine and it cannot be limited to the doctrine about Christ.

“These verses demand that false teachers be excluded from fellowship. To fail to do so is to partake of their evil deeds. The attempt that is made by some to limit fellowship to the gospel while making a distinction between gospel and doctrine is denied by II John 9-11. It is high time, instead of listening to these teachers, that we follow the inspired directions given by the apostle John—to refuse fellowship to those that teach false doctrine” (Camp, 234).

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS— QUESTIONS IMPACTING THE CHURCH’S FELLOWSHIP BOUNDARIES

The true test of biblical doctrine is its practicality. The way to expose error is to observe its impracticality. Truth will enhance and govern life in practical life. Error leads to inconsistency and conflict.

As we examine “the doctrine of Christ” under the scope of practicality, its truth and application becomes very clear. The practical application of “the doctrine of Christ” clearly distinguishes which of the interpretations is truth.

First a matter of practical clarity. Is the deity/incarnation of Christ the ONLY criterion for fellowship/salvation? If the

incarnation is the only criterion for fellowship, what about other texts limiting fellowship by other criteria of belief/behavior? By interpreting 2 John 9-11 as referring only to the incarnation of Christ throws the entire ethical and moral center of Christianity into chaos. Let the erudite “progressive” tell us WHERE does Christian fellowship begin and end? If one’s belief in the incarnation of Christ is the only standard for fellowship then we are permitted to fellowship any mortal or spiritual being who believes that Jesus came in the flesh. But if the “doctrine of Christ” refers to the Lord’s teachings, commands, and words communicated by Inspiration, then we can fellowship ONLY those who have not “gone beyond” the written doctrine of the Bible. One must follow Ephesians 5:3-11. So exactly HOW are we to do this? What is the Rule of Law—is it our own rule or is it the written Word of God? The practical and consistent answer is that the doctrine of Christ includes His words, commands and truth that were given to the Apostles and committed to writing in the Bible.

Second a matter of practical revelation. Those who want to restrict the binding commands only to the “red-letters” of the Gospel or to the deity of Christ, admit they do not have the TOTALITY OF Christ’s teachings because Christ Himself admitted that the FULL revelation of His teaching would occur only when the Holy Spirit came and guided the written messages of the New Testament (John 14:26)! Why will one find comfort in an incomplete revelation? Such a position is absurdity gone to seed!

Third a matter of practical Christian living. Christianity is a lifestyle devoted to holy living. If there is no doctrine to follow except the incarnation of Christ, then Christians are left without a practical guide for holy living. There are certain lifestyles that neither God nor His children can fellowship but how can we decide these if the “doctrine of Christ” only applies to His incarnation?

Fourth it is a matter of practical salvation. As already noted, this observation by brother Highers is most insightful to the practical application of the Anarchists/ Destructionists revision of 2 John 9-11. “The word ‘doctrine’ is used twice in II John 9, 10: First, ‘whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God.’ And second. ‘whosoever abideth in the

doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son.' Whatever 'the doctrine of Christ' means in the first part of the passage, it means in the latter. If the first allusion to 'the doctrine of Christ' refers only to his coming in the flesh, and one who abides not in this doctrine 'hath not God,' then all that one in the latter part of the passage must do to have both the Father and the Son is to abide in the doctrine that Christ came in the flesh. This would amount to salvation by faith only" (Highers, 47). Hence the ONLY condition for salvation is believing in the incarnation of Christ!

Fifth it is a matter of practical fellowship. What will determine fellowship? If the "doctrine of Christ" is only the teaching about His incarnation then that is the only fellowship requirement. The Christian would be compelled to accept and applaud those in the most heinous behaviors if they believed Christ came in the flesh. But such an inclusive fellowship is contradictory to the Bible's requirements of holy living and holy associations.

If one does not agree that the "doctrine of Christ" refers to His words, commands and truth that were given to the Apostles and committed to writing in the Bible, then he has to accept and applaud any belief and behavior as long as one believes that Christ came in the flesh. This point exposes the error of interpreting 2 John 9-11 in the liberal/progressive manner.

Maintaining the progressive's interpretation of 2 John 9-11 means fellowship MUST exist in spite of gross immorality...as long as one believes that Christ came in the flesh then he must be fellowshipped and considered a partner in the Gospel! Can one honestly say that the ONLY basis for fellowship is belief in His incarnation? If so how does that explain the myriad of other texts commanding that fellowship must be terminated because one is not obeying the "doctrine of Christ"?

Christian fellowship is restricted by MUCH more than simply believing in the incarnation of Christ.

- Fellowship does not extend to anyone outside of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 6:17)
- Fellowship does not extend to a disorderly brother (2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13)

- Fellowship does not extend to the factious (Titus 3:10, 11). Strife and division are serious offenses and we must refuse fellowship to those who persist in such conduct.

Fellowship is not to be extended to false teachers (Romans 16:17—"to mark" is to fix one's eyes upon; to direct attention to; "to avoid" is to stay away from and have no association or partnership with them). This is exactly what 2 John 9-11 commands.

Fellowship is not to embrace false religions (Ephesians 5:11, 12). Denominations fall into this classification—they are a different religion than that found in the New Testament because they honor man's creeds more than the Word of God. (See 2 Corinthians 6:14-16)

Fellowship does not embrace false worship (Matthew 15:9; 1 Corinthians 10:21; Colossians 2:23).

Sixth it is a matter of practical obedience to God's commands. It is impossible to obey God's requirements if one interprets 2 John 9-11 as stating the basis for fellowship is only the incarnation of Christ. How can you "rebuke" evil and have no fellowship with the "works" of darkness" when your Rule of Law says such terms are not to be included in the fellowship conditions? How do you remain bold and not timid in standing for the Truth (2 Timothy 1:7) when your Rule of Law condones any belief and behavior as long as it does not deny the incarnation of Jesus Christ?

Seventh, it is a matter of religious unity. The only way for there to be religious unity is for all concerned to follow exactly what God's Book commands. This was the solution to religious division in the first century. The Corinthian congregation was torn apart by anarchists who followed their own desires. Thus the warning of Inspiration simply stated "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written" (1 Corinthians 4:6). The evil anarchy had prompted some to "go beyond the things written." Once again we observe how the "progressives" led away from salvation and into damnation.

The solution to Corinth's religious division was not offering a unity and fellowship on

some wrested platform. Unity was to be found ONLY by following the Inspired counsel to the Corinthian congregation, "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

God NEVER considers the possibility of a religious unity with each holding to different beliefs and behaviors. The only way unity is possible is if all follow the same directions found in "the doctrine of Christ." Only those following God's directions contribute to unity—those unwilling to follow God's directions and who "go beyond" these directions have no part in our fellowship.

"There cannot be an increase of love between brethren by rejecting the truth of the gospel which must be held in common. The present unity movement ignores this vital fact and seeks unity by compromising the truth on which true love and unity depend. It is said that love is blind. The marriage that is entered into in a blind love soon opens the eyes to the tragic consequence of this kind of love. Jesus said, 'If the blind leads the blind, they both will fall into the ditch' (Matthew 15:14). What is true of blind love in marriage is likewise true in Christianity. Allowing the 'blind lovers' of today to lead will carry the church into the ditch of compromise and apostasy" (Camp, 230)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The "doctrine of Christ" is the total teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the teachings that He first spoke and then sent the Holy Spirit to cause the Apostles to remember (John 14:26). Then the Apostles would teach this doctrine to others. It was this teaching that inspired authors of Holy Scripture were superintended to transcribe in written form so that following generations would have that "doctrine" available for their study and governing.

Notice these texts that bring the honest heart to an undeniable conclusion.

- Matthew 7:28, 29—the people were astonished at His "doctrine" that He had communicated in His

“teaching” (nothing in referenced to His incarnation!).

- Matthew 22:33—they were astonished at His “doctrine” that He had communicated in His “teaching” (nothing in referenced to His incarnation!).
- Mark 4:2—Christ “taught” His “doctrine” in parables (nothing in referenced to His incarnation!).
- Mark 11:18—the people were astonished at His “doctrine” which He had communicated in His teachings (nothing in referenced to His incarnation!).
- Mark 12:38—Christ’s “doctrine” involved Him warning about false teachers (nothing in referenced to His incarnation!).

To fellowship those who teach false doctrine is to lose one’s fellowship with God.

It is undeniable that the “doctrine of Christ” involved His teaching commands and truth by the words He spoke! Interpreting “the doctrine of Christ” in 2 John 9-11 in any other way is to cast aside God’s Rule of Law and becoming a Destructionist that is controlled by anarchy.

The conclusion of this study is aptly summarized in this observation:

“When one refuses to speak the things which befit sound doctrine (Titus 2:1), and persists in the perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth (1 Timothy 6:5), then we become partakers of his evil deeds (2 John 11) if we refuse to mark and avoid them.” (Powell, 240)

“Even if ‘doctrine of Christ’ did not refer to all of Christ’s teaching in the ninth verse of Second John, the change agents would still have no basis for restricting fellowship to one or a few ‘essentials.’ Too many other passages teach the same thing in contexts that clearly pertain to doctrines far beyond simply the person/deity of Christ...One example out of many would be First Corinthians chapter five where Paul insists that fellowship between Christians must be disrupted over such matters as fornication, covetousness, extortion, and

drunkenness (I Corinthians 5:10-11). None of these items have to do with the person of Christ. Yet they are clearly treated in Scriptures as matters of fellowship that affect unity.” (Miller, 304 -305).

“Paul prayed that the love of the Philippians would abound in knowledge and judgment being able to discriminate between things that differ (Philippians 1:9, 10). This is the same command that John advocates. It is truth that enables one’s love to discriminate. Love is not to be so blind as to ignore doctrinal error and the unscriptural conduct of others. John saw no problem of inconsistency in the command to love and refusing fellowship with false teachers, Love is not to destroy loyalty to truth. Love demands loyalty to truth which means love is opposed to error. Christian fellowship includes both love and truth. Neither one is to be sacrificed at the expense of the other. Love grows soft if it is not molded by truth and truth becomes harsh when it is not controlled by love. The scriptural formula, as stated in II John, is to love in truth and to hold the truth in love. It is false love that runs around with error and encourages it” (Camp, 230).

“The doctrine of Christ is the doctrine given him of the Father. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak (Jn. 12:49-50). To accept the doctrine of Christ is to receive the teaching of the Father, and to reject the doctrine of Christ is tantamount to rejecting the word of God. Thus, whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God (II Jn. 9). (Highers, 47)

As we complete this article we reach a conclusion that is consistent with application of Scriptural’ principles in the Old Testament and the New Testament; that is consistent with the exhortation for Christians to live a life of holy devotion because they are separated from the world and, that is consistent with the Almighty God’s commands for Christians to be shining lights in a dark world and utilize their light to expose the evil darkness.

This consistent conclusion is that “the doctrine of Christ” refers to the totality of

the Lord’s teachings, commands, and doctrines. These were verbally taught to the Apostles and then further instructed by the Holy Spirit and ultimately committed to the infallible written Word by Inspiration.

It is not the doctrine ABOUT Christ but the doctrine FROM Christ!

Only by adhering to “the doctrine of Christ” is one able to be saved and live righteously. This truth simply states that only by obeying the totality of God’s commands can one be saved and sanctified!

As was stated centuries ago but still applicable today:

“This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man, for God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

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