

III. LOVE DEFINED (2 John 1:6)

A. His Commandments

1. The antecedent to the pronoun *his* is the Father in verse 4, which states that “we have received a commandment from the Father.”
2. The commandments we obey are the commandments of the Father.
3. However, the particular commandment expressed in verse 5—“that we love one another”—is a commandment that was given by the Son (John 13:34-35; John 15:12). Yet, this is no contradiction.
4. The commandments given by the Son were the Father’s commandments.

B. God’s Commandments Defined as Love

1. God made the connection between love and obeying His commandments.
2. The first connection is found in the giving of the Ten Commandments where God identifies Himself as “shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:6).
3. Several New Testament verses emphasize this connection (John 14:15, 21, 31; 1 John 5:2-3).
4. The elect lady was using the importance of love as an excuse to overlook doctrinal heresy. John pointed out that one of the most important expressions of our love to God is the keeping of His commandments.
5. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments. If we love Him, we will reject those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 1:9-10).

IV. TRUTH DEFENDED (2 John 1:7)

A. The Doctrinal Error

1. For centuries after the coming of Jesus Christ, the early believers struggled with the concept of One who was both God and man.
2. Many refused to accept scripture at face value and determined to make logical sense of scripture by rejecting the dual nature of Christ.
3. Those who could not accept the God-man went in two opposite directions:
 - a. The Ebionites rejected the deity of Jesus Christ.
 - (1) He was man; therefore, he could not be God.
 - (2) Many taught that Christ came upon Jesus at his baptism and left at the cross.
 - (3) But, in the end, Jesus himself was just a good man.
 - b. The Docetics rejected the humanity of Jesus Christ.
 - (1) This group saw the clear scriptural teaching that Jesus Christ was divine, but they could not logically reconcile the idea of One who was both God and man.
 - (2) Therefore, they taught that Jesus only appeared to be human.
 - (3) He was actually the divine Christ who appeared in human form but was not truly human.

4. John is dealing with the second approach to the rejection of the God-man in this passage. Although this group was not yet called the Docetics, the doctrine itself was beginning to surface.
5. John wrote this epistle around AD 95. Jesus died on the cross about sixty-five years earlier. Few now lived who remembered seeing Jesus in the flesh. Only after most of the visible witnesses were off the scene could this heresy begin to flourish.
6. This doctrine is also dealt with in the First Epistle General of John and is said to come from the spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:2-3). John goes so far as to state that the rejection of the humanity of Christ proves that one is not of God. The fact that John is battling against this heresy explains why he opens 1 John the way he does.

B. The Deceivers

1. Their nature
 - a. To deceive is to make a person believe what is not true; to mislead.
 - b. Jesus warned of false prophets and antichrists who would deceive many (Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24).
 - c. Paul also warned against deceivers.
 - (1) In Romans 16:18, Paul said, “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”
 - (2) Again, he warned against those who come “with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14).
 - (3) In speaking of the last days, he declared that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).
 - d. The men who were teaching them this false doctrine were misleading them for their own benefit and to the harm of those being led.
 - e. Sometimes deceivers will settle for a middle ground. If they cannot get sufficient followers, they will often settle for being tolerated and generally accepted as a valid option.
 - f. They will seek peace with the true believers. In this, as with the elect lady, the true followers of Christ can still be deceived. They do not believe the false doctrine but they make peace with the deceivers. This in time leads to further compromise and it is a dangerous position to take.
2. Their number
 - a. This verse speaks of many deceivers that “entered into the world.”
 - b. 1 John 4:1 warns that “many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
 - c. In Acts 20:29, Paul cautioned the Ephesians elders “that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”

3. Their affiliation
 - a. They are called *an antichrist*.
 - b. The word *antichrist* is only used in the Bible in the epistles of John. John uses the word five times in four verses (1 John 2:18, 22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7).
 - c. These verses show that there is one who is the Antichrist (1 John 2:18), that there is a “spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:3), and that there are numerous antichrists (1 John 2:18; 2 John 1:7).
 - d. The word *antichrist* means “against Christ.” However, the word is also used of one who is a false Christ. The three uses mentioned above need to be defined:
 - (1) Antichrist
 - a) This use of the word refers to that particular one who will come during the time of tribulation, not only to oppose the true Christ, but to declare himself to be the Christ.
 - b) The epistles of John do not in any way deny the coming of the one final Antichrist, but only look to another application of the term.
 - (2) Spirit of antichrist
 - a) 1 John 4:3 tells us that the false doctrine that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh is of the “spirit of antichrist.”
 - b) From this, we can conclude that any doctrine that denies that Jesus is fully God and fully man subtracts from who He is and is, therefore, *against Christ*.
 - (3) Antichrists
 - a) 1 John 2:18 warns us that “even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”
 - b) From these scriptures, we can see two kinds of people who are antichrists.
 - i) First, there are those who deny the fulness of Christ either in His humanity or in His deity. They are antichrists because they spread teaching that is against Christ.
 - ii) Second, there are those who falsely claim to be Christ. Jesus warned, “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:5). He also prophesied, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).
 - e. As the day of the coming of the true Christ draws nigh, there will be more and more deceivers who either deny that Christ was all the Bible says He is or who will claim to be Christ themselves. These deceivers must be opposed.

The Second Epistle General of John

A Stand for Truth

2 John 1:8-13

I. LOSS OF REWARD (2 John 1:8)

A. Look to **Yourselves**

1. Jesus told His disciples, “Take heed lest any man deceive you” (Mark 13:5).
2. Numerous scriptures warn the believer to pay attention to his own condition and to the dangers that confront him.
 - a. We are to walk circumspectly; that is, looking all around us to check for any dangers (Ephesians 5:15).
 - b. We are to be sober and vigilant because the devil walks about seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).
3. We are to pay special attention to our own relationship with the Lord.
 - a. Paul told Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:16).
 - b. Paul told the Corinthians, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5).
 - c. We are to keep a watchful eye on our spiritual condition and be ready to correct that which is wrong when we see ourselves drifting.

B. That **We** Lose Not

1. Why does John use *we* and not *you* in the phrases “that we lose not” and “that we receive”?
2. John recognized that when someone falls from the faith, that person is not the only one who suffers loss. Not only does the offending Christian lose rewards, but those who ministered to the believer lose as well.
 - a. When the Galatians turned from the simplicity of the gospel and added legalistic requirements, Paul said to them, “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Galatians 4:11).
 - b. He exhorted the Philippians to hold fast the word: “that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (Philippians 2:16).
3. What does the faithful Christian lose when those to whom he ministered fail to be faithful to the Lord?
 - a. One thing we need to understand is that the faithful servant will not lose any personal reward because of unfaithful disciples.
 - b. However, there is another aspect of future rewards that can be lost.
 - (1) Paul asked the Thessalonians, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

- (2) Philippians 2:16 tells us that faithful converts will be a source of rejoicing in the day of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 2:19 tells us that these faithful followers will be a crown of rejoicing to those who have led them to the Lord and trained them.
4. This part of the reward, though not a personal reward, is one of the most joyous aspects of our heavenly home. We will be able to see the results of our labours for Christ and these saints will be a crown of rejoicing for us in heaven.
5. These are sober thoughts that remind us that our unfaithfulness will be a loss to others. No wonder Paul connected his joy with the faithfulness of the Philippians to stand fast: “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved” (Philippians 4:1).

C. Receiving a Full Reward

1. The Bible teaches that heavenly rewards that were earned early in our Christian life can be lost by rebellion or disobedience at a later time.
2. Something that is “wrought” has already been worked for. Yet, if we do not look to ourselves and continue in our obedience to the Lord, these earlier rewards may be lost (1 Corinthians 3:15).
3. To receive a full reward is to receive reward for all the good the believer has done with nothing being lost by later transgressions.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST (2 John 1:9-11)

A. What Is the Doctrine of Christ? (2 John 1:9)

1. The phrase is found only two times in the Bible—here and in Hebrews 6:1. In both cases, the context indicates that the phrase refers to the teaching of the Bible concerning the person and work of Christ.
2. In other words, the doctrine of Christ is the Bible teaching (or doctrine) about Jesus Christ.
3. These two verses give two great truths about the doctrine of Christ.
 - a. First, it is essential for salvation (2 John 1:9).
 - b. Second, it is basic to our understanding of other doctrine in scripture and in establishing ourselves in the Christian life (Hebrews 6:1).
4. Specifically, in 2 John 1:9, the true doctrine of Christ is the one that holds to Jesus Christ coming in the flesh (that is, that He did not come in spirit form only).

B. Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ (2 John 1:9)

1. To abide means to remain or stay in a place.
2. To abide in the doctrine of Christ would mean to accept the biblical teaching about Jesus Christ as the truth and to hold on to it.