

Sunday, April 19, 2026 am

What God Has (and Has Not) Joined Together (9)

Christ and His Doctrine - 2 John 9

Today we continue our 2026 theme. The past few lessons have addressed doctrines related to Jesus – Christ and His Church, Christ and the teachings of the apostles. Today we want to continue on that track by noticing God has joined together the teachings of Christ and teachings of the apostles.

Similar to the argument about the teachings of the apostles being limited, there are some who advocate that only teachings about Jesus are necessary or what they define as “the core gospel” message. Thus, all other doctrines are subject to personal choice. One primary passage of contention is 2 John 9, “*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God...*” In this lesson we want to address this passage and discuss what “the doctrine of Christ” is.

I. The problem stated

- a. Some advocate that we only need to follow the teachings of Jesus Himself – we addressed this in our last lesson, noting that what the apostles taught was with authority from Jesus and equally binding (cf. John 14:26, 16:12-15, Galatians 1:10-12, 1 Corinthians 14:37, etc.). Keep that in mind with this lesson.
- b. Some advocate that as long as we agree with “the core gospel” we can have fellowship with others – by “core gospel” they mean the basic elements of the gospel - e.g., Believing in God, the Bible is His word, Jesus is the Son of God, He arose, accept Him as your Savior, eternal security, etc. Thus they teach there is a difference between gospel and doctrine. They accept what Jesus AND His apostles taught that was “core” to salvation. The PROBLEM with this belief is that it renders much of the teachings of the New Testament as irrelevant (or optional and open to your personal interpretation). Furthermore, WHO gets to determine exactly which beliefs are “core gospel”?
- c. Some want to limit passages about doctrine to the specifics of a text – e.g., 2 John 9 warns us that *if anyone does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, he does not have God*. They advocate that the context only applies to the doctrine that Jesus did come in the flesh (vs. 7). Or they might expand it to what scripture says about WHO Jesus actually was. They might apply this approach to other passages as well – e.g., Matthew 19 was a Jewish problem and MDR only applies to very specific situations, etc.
- d. THE PROBLEM: The approach of such interpretations is almost always to extend fellowship beyond the bounds of scripture.
- e. But the Bible is clear that who we have fellowship with matters – 2 John 9-11, Ephesians 5:11, 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, 1 John 1:3, 6-7, etc. And doctrine (what we believe and teach) is part of our fellowship.

II. What is the doctrine of Christ – 2 John 9?

- a. Our focus in this lesson will be to determine what the doctrine of Christ is based on this text.
- b. In summary, the doctrine of Christ is the entire body of the New Testament – both what Jesus taught AND what His apostles taught by His authority. See our last lesson!
- c. The word *doctrine* – is a word that means *teachings* in its fundamental usage. Typically, when we think of doctrine we think of something we believe (accept or reject) that has been taught BY someone.
- d. Jesus emphasized the authority of His teachings –
 - i. John 8:31-32 – Jesus noted that *if you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*. Jesus was clear that what He TAUGHT was what frees us – NOT just learning about Him (note: Learning ABOUT Him is part of this doctrine, but there is more).

- ii. John 12:48, *He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*
- iii. John 14:21, *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*”
- iv. It was the *teachings* (same word as doctrine in 2 John 9) of Jesus that provoked a response.
 - 1. Matthew 7:28-29 – at the conclusion of the “sermon on the mount”
 - 2. Luke 4:32 – they were astonished at His teaching, *for His word was with authority.*
- e. The usage of the word doctrine makes this clear – the word clearly implies what is being taught.
 - i. Acts 2:42 – the apostle’s doctrine – is this the doctrine about the apostles or what they taught?
 - ii. Matthew 16:6, 12 – Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. When explained they understood He was speaking of “the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees”. Was this just about learning who these sects were OR was it (did it include) their teachings?
 - iii. Matthew 15:9, Colossians 2:22 – the doctrines of men. Both texts establish it was their teachings.
 - iv. 1 Timothy 4:1 – the doctrines of demons. Was this about what a demon was or their teachings?
 - v. Revelation 2:14-15 – the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans? The Lord hated this *doctrine*. Did He hate someone being aware of who Balaam and the Nicolaitans were OR was it their teachings?
- f. The context of 2 John 9 –
 - i. 2 John 1 – those John loved – “in truth... all those who have known the truth.”
 - ii. 2 John 2 – *because of the truth that abides in us*
 - iii. 2 John 4 – your children are walking in truth, as we have received a commandment...
 - iv. 2 John 6 – this is love, that we walk according to His commandments...
 - v. 2 John 7-8 – the specific error that John is addressing – denying that Jesus came in the flesh. BUT based upon context, this is an APPLICATION of the principle of abiding in truth. It is NOT the principle itself. Many examples of this could be given. Cf. 1 John 4:1-2 – is the principle of “testing the spirits, whether they are of God...” limited only to the one that confesses Jesus came in the flesh, OR is it a principle, with the SPECIFIC TEST being an APPLICATION of the principle?
 - vi. 2 John 9-11 – gives the principle we must apply to determining what is truth. And it clearly warns us that we cannot fellowship the one who is teaching error (not applying the principle consistently). NOTE: The word “shares” in vs. 11 is based upon the same root as “fellowship”.
 - vii. This is the message of this short letter.

III. 2 John 9-11 – ABIDING in the doctrine of Christ

- a. Having established that the doctrine of Christ means the entirety of the New Testament – what Jesus taught others, what He taught His apostles and what they taught under H.S. guidance, let us conclude by noting what it means to ABIDE in His doctrine.
- b. **Abide** means to dwell or to make one’s home and to continue in it. It is a word that implies some permanence (not something flippantly or temporarily accepted). It is a condition we remain in. We emphasized this in our study about discipleship. This is the same word as John 8:31.
- c. When we abide in the “doctrine of Christ” we are abiding in:
 - i. John 8:31-32 – the words of Jesus – the truth which makes you free.
 - ii. John 6:27 – the “food which endures to everlasting life.” This is about believing in Him and abiding In Him (6:56)
 - iii. John 15:5 – in Him and are bearing much fruit – it involves action.

- iv. John 15:9-10 – in the love of Jesus and keeping His commandments
- v. 2 Timothy 3:14 – **continuing** in the things we have learned and been assured of
- vi. 1 John 2:6 – walking as He walked – following His example
- vii. 1 John 2:10 – in the light (manifested by loving one another)
- viii. 1 John 2:14 – His word which overcomes the wicked one
- ix. 1 John 2:24 – what you have heard from the beginning (teachings); also in the Son and in the Father.
- x. 1 John 3:24 – keeping His commandments
- xi. 1 John 4:16 – abides in love abides in God
- xii. 2 John 2 – the truth (see above).

And thus we can see that God has joined together Christ and ALL that He taught (including what His apostles taught with authority). We need to understand the fundamentals of the gospel to be saved, but we also need ALL of God's word as it applies to us. Recall Matthew 28:19-20, *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” Amen.

Are you abiding by the “whole counsel of God”? Think about it!