

The Second Epistle of John

...And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. (2 John 1:6)

2 John 10-11

Someone read 2John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-13

Someone read v10:

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; (2 John 1:10 NASB)

Listen to this:

Whoever, therefore, who comes and teaches you all these things mentioned, receive him. But if the one teaching changes what has been taught to another teaching in order to destroy these things, do not listen to him. However, if his teaching contributes to righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, welcome him as you would the Lord. (*Didache* 11.2)

Similar, isn't it?

It's from a document written at a time very close to the time 2nd John was written. It comes from a book called *The Didache, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*.

It illustrates that at this time, there were many missionaries going out into the world, some true and some false. It was a real concern for John that the heretics be utterly rejected.

Notice that these false missionaries bring their lies with them. What lies do they bring?

That Christ did not come in the flesh (v 7).

These are not merely believers in this false doctrine, they are teachers of it. And how will God judge them?

Jam 3:1

What does it mean to 'receive them into your house'?

In the days of John, itinerant teachers would stay in a person's home and use it as a beachhead for their evangelistic efforts.

John is saying that we should never allow our homes to be used by false teachers to spread their false doctrines.

It is always vital to keep in mind how the Bible would have been understood by the original readers. This is what is meant by the Historical-Grammatical approach to Biblical Interpretation.

So, let's get very practical: Should Christians accept Mormon Missionaries or JWs into their homes?

If you are welcoming them into your home to enlighten them to the true Christ and correct their false beliefs, then by all means, you should do so, especially if you feel led by the Holy Spirit.

What about if they ask to return with an Elder or teacher from their church?

This is more problematic. Again, it's all about your heart. Don't go into it intending to win an argument. You'll only be frustrated. Ask a lot of questions about their beliefs and how they account for them. Be ready to defend your own beliefs, and why you believe them.

There's a fine balance between evangelism and engaging heretical teachers, and when in doubt, opt for a brief statement of your beliefs and disengage.

You should use this experience to learn more about what you believe and why you believe it. Then, after you study, you will be better prepared.

John knew his readers were not mature enough in the faith to adequately stand up to the false teaching. This is a possible indication that John's letter was intended to a real Elect Lady and her children.

John is specifically dealing with false Christology – the doctrine of the Incarnation, the deity of Christ, and the Atonement.

Why does John say we should not even offer the false teachers a greeting?

Chairō

4) in salutations, hail!

5) at the beginning of letters: to give one greeting, salute

It is related to the word for rejoice, to be glad exceedingly.

It can either mean a welcome or a farewell. In this case, probably means the latter.

Because it would imply endorsement.

It would be inconsistent to wish a Godly blessing on one who sought to destroy the beliefs you hold dear.

Let's move on to the next verse:

for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds. (2 John 1:11 NASB)

Now, John gives the reason for his warning. And what is that?

In what ways do we "participate" in the evil deeds committed by the heretics?

1. By implying we condone the heretical teachers and what they are teaching
2. By condoning the one who accepts the heretical teaching
3. By the offense given to those who don't accept that teaching

These actions would contradict John's express lessons in 1Jn 1:3, 7

Indeed, John chooses the same word in these verses for fellowship/participate (*koinōnia*).

By accepting the false teachers into our homes so as to make them a jumping off point for false teaching, we would have fellowship with their evil deeds.

"evil deeds" (literally, "in the deeds of them, the wicked ones").

The word translated "deed" is the Greek *Ergois* (the plural of the word from which we get erg (a unit of force) and ergonomic (work-related)).

The adjective 'wicked' is the plural form of the word John typically uses for the Devil

1Jn 2:13-14

John stresses the vicious nature of the evil deeds by placing the word "evil" at the end of the sentence. It was in light of this dangerous possibility that he wrote what he did in v8:

Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. (2 John 1:8 NASB)

To quote IH Marshall: the Church “is too ready to profess doubt even as regards the centralities of the gospel and too ready to tolerate dissent from the faith once for all handed down to the people of God.”

In a day where there is a diminishing sense of the danger of open heresy, the tendency is to tolerate known heresy for the sake of unity.

Notice what John does not say. Does he anywhere give advice about how to counteract the heretics, or return them to the orthodox faith?

Again, John knows his audience. He was aware that they would be ill-equipped to go head-to-head with the false teacher in a game of scripture ping-pong. If his readers attempted to engage them on their own terms, they would likely be taken in by their deadly deviations from orthodoxy.

These false teachers had already rejected efforts by genuine teachers and left the church (1Jn 2:18-19), and John did not see that the efforts by the readers would be more effective.

John’s concern was rather to shield his readers from the subtle efforts of the practiced deceivers and antichrists.