

The Second Epistle of John

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

2 John 6-7

Someone read 2John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-13

Someone read v6:

And (14) this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, (15) just as you have heard (16) from the beginning, that you should walk in it. (2 John 1:6)

“This is love” = lit. “This in *the* love.” What love is John referring to, here?

“that we walk according to His commandments”

What does it mean to “walk according to something?”

To obey. Obedience is stressed. And it is inseparably tied to love. In v5, John talks about a *commandment* and *love*. Now, he reverses the terms to emphasize true Christian love is living according to God’s commandments.

One commentator says it this way: “Love divorced from obedience will run riot; obedience divorced from love will starve.” Where there is no obedience to God, there is no love for Him. On the other hand, Christian love is revealed when we walk according His commands. Only then – with these two actions in perfect balance – can we be genuinely free.

Ps 119:45

Free from sin - free from the culture, free from the flesh, free from Satan and his wiles – in short, free to experience our lives as God originally intended.

Why do you think John writes “commandment” in the singular in v5, and the plural in v6?

The commentator IH Marshall notes – I believe correctly – that the singular form marks the one command to love one another, and plural is used for all the various ways we express that love.

God’s various commandments give guidance to us when we encounter diverse situations in our Christian walks. The present tense “walk” is figurative of daily life with

its various activities, while “according to” suggests that these commands mark out the path to be followed in every circumstance.

John returns to the singular, noting that all these various commandments are in reality gathered up in the one command to “love one another.” This is the signpost marking a victorious Christian life.

“just as you have heard from the beginning”

Which beginning is John referring to, here?

The beginning of their Christian walk.

Why does John repeat it (vv5, 6)?

There’s an old saying: “Repetition is the mother of learning.” When we are confronted by some strange new idea, we tend to forget the fundamental truths that changed our lives when we first heard them.

This would have been true for the Lady and her children, when confronting the heretics, which makes their obedience even more commendable.

If does someone have the KJV? Please read the end of v6:

“ye should walk”

“Ye” is singular or plural?

Plural. What does this signify?

You all should walk – John is speaking to his entire audience, not a single individual.

“In it” (NASB) or “in love” The Greek *aute* = “it” and both ‘command’ and ‘love’ are feminine, so it could refer to either one. Which do you think it is?

I’d say the context favors “love.” That view is shared by Stott, Hiebert, M Henry, Bruce, and Marshall. Only John Gill and the translators of the NEB favor “command.”

John argument is intentionally circular: Love of God that does not result in obedience to the Word of God cannot be the love that is God’s gift in Jesus Christ.

See 1 Jn 2:11, 3:14.

Hatred of one’s brother can never be defended as obedience to God.

Let’s move on to the next verse:

For (17) many deceivers have (18) gone out into the world, those who (19) do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is (20) the deceiver and the (21) antichrist. (2 John 1:7)

The NIV renders this verse slightly differently. Can someone please read this in the NIV?

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. (2 John 1:7)

The first difference is the word “For” occurs in the NASB, but not the NIV. It renders the Greek *hoti*, which not only serves as a connecting word to what John has said before, but also introduces the reasons for the call to mutual love.

John now turns from true believers to the false teachers, from the wheat to the tares, as John Stott puts it.. The unity of believers in mutual love and obedience inoculates them against false and deceptive teaching.

Read 1 Jn 2:18-19; 4:1-6

John gives essentially the same warning here.

What does the term “many” signify?

It was a widespread movement which presents a real threat to believers.

The word “deceivers” characterizes their fundamental goal is to intentionally deceive and to lead away the unwary. This underlines why obedience is so important – we have to obey God’s Word because it is true. And what does “true” mean?

Corresponding to reality.

The deceivers cannot rest until they have ensnared others in their error.

Another difference between the NASB and the NIV is the word-order. Someone read the first sentence of v7 in the NASB and someone read it in the NIV.

The NASB more accurately reflects the Greek word-order.

“Gone out into the world.”

This may echo 1 Jn 2:19, but I think it means more than that. The heretics may very well consider themselves to be on a special mission – one of deception – designed to parody the mission of Jesus and the Apostles. “Christ was being aped by antichrist.” (Stott). And who is behind their mission of falsehood?

The apostate nature of their mission is made clear by what they deny. And what is that?

do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.

That is, they deny the very nature of the God-Man. Notice how precisely John puts their denial: “in the flesh.” John never speaks of Jesus coming “into” the flesh – which would leave the door open the heretics. Specifically, the Docetic Gnostics taught what?

Who was the primary advocates of Doceticism?

And what is the result when you have a Christ that only “seemed” human?

The Incarnation goes out the window, and the atonement with it!

The final difference between the NASB and the NIV is in the last sentence of v7. Read each:

This is the deceiver and the antichrist. (NASB)

Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. (NIV)

It should not surprise you that the NASB more accurately reflects the Greek, although the NIV is an accurate paraphrase.

The Greek is *houtos*, and it is the demonstrative pronoun meaning “this one.” It stresses that the terms “deceiver” and “antichrist” belong to every individual that is part of this group. It is their true identity.

The definite article with both “deceiver” and “antichrist” stresses they personally embody the very nature of both terms.

They seek to lead people away from the truth in Christ and to replace Him with a substitute of their own devising.

As one commentator notes: “these many antichrists who in a degree fulfill the character, are forerunners of the final, personal Antichrist who shall concentrate in himself all the features of previous antichristian systems.”