

The Second Epistle of John

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

2 John 8-9

Someone read 2John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-13

Someone read v8:

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

Having warned his readers, John now abandons polite requests and instead emphatically demands that they insure their safety: “look to yourselves, watch out, guard yourselves.”

Why?

He wants to stress the danger so that they will be vigilant against the deadly heresy he writes about in the previous verse. While not unmindful of God’s care for them, John reminds his readers that it is their personal duty to always be on guard against the anti-Christ, those who desire to replace Christ with a counterfeit messiah of their own devising.

Let’s look at the rest of this verse in 3 different translations:

that *you* do not lose what *we* have accomplished, but that *you* may receive a full reward.
(NASB)

that *you* do not lose what *you* have worked for, but that *you* may be rewarded fully.
(NIV)

that *we* lose not those things which *we* have wrought, but that *we* receive a full reward.
(KJV)

How do these translations differ?

MSS evidence points to the KJV not being accurate (the MSS the KJV is based on has second person plural verbs in all 3 cases – “we”). Older MSS have one person plural verbs – “you” – in the first and third cases.

The older Greek MSS are mixed, however, for the second case. (“what we have accomplished” – NASB; “what you have worked for” – NIV).

Based on sheer number, the NIV wins. But the editors of the United Bible Societies GNT have provided two reasons to prefer the way it appears in the NASB:

1. Scribal error: Scribes typically want to harmonize texts. They would want to make all 3 verbs the same. Thus, different verb forms are best explained as originating with John.
2. Internal: "The delicate nuance ("...that you do not destroy the things which we, apostles and teachers, wrought in you") is more likely to be due to the author than to the copyists."

If the NIV is correct, John is warning his readers that they must be on guard lest they destroy their own accomplishments. If they give in to the false teachers, they will be destroying the spiritual growth they have gained by their acceptance of the Gospel.

If the NASB (and ESV and NET, as well), John is making a twofold appeal:

1. He is making a touching appeal to their affection for the Elder by reminding them that if they fall victim to the false teachers, they will be destroying what we have accomplished. "We" who originally presented the Gospel – John himself and his fellow missionaries.
2. But "we" may not merely mean "we and NOT you," but "we AND you" together. That is, it may unite the efforts of the readers with the evangelists. As one commentator puts it:
 - a. The author's touch was both delicate and humble. He regarded himself as a co-laborer with his readers and their loss would be shared by him if they did not effectively resist the false doctrine. The antichrists were a threat to the work of the Lord in which he and they were mutually engaged."

John moves on to make an appeal to the future reward they will receive in full – literally "Filled up, in full measure, nothing lacking." Is John teaching that we can earn salvation?

Of course not. What is he referring to?

2 Cor 5:10; Rev 3:11

John is referring to the final judgment of Christ of believers, when we (we hope) will receive our crowns from the King.

In that future day, as a further expression of His grace, God will reward present faithfulness and obedience to His commands. It is another instance of John's appeal to the future hope to encourage present faithfulness.

1 Jn 2:28

Someone read v9.

Anyone who goes too far and (24) does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. (2 John 1:9 NASB)

John sets forth the contrast between the heretics and true believers with two parallel statements that are polar opposites. This is a typical way for John to write:

See 1 Jn 1:5ff

He first sets out the fundamental characteristics of each group and then the consequences that result.

We have a difference between the KJV and the modern English translations.

Someone read the first words of this verse in the NKJV/KJV:

“Whosoever transgresseth”

The modern English versions read

“Anyone who goes too far”

Once again, we have a difference between the MSS underlying the KJV and the older MSS.

The one behind the KJV reads *parabainō*

Which means to go along beside of, to go past; metaphorically, to violate or transgress.

The one behind the modern versions reads *proagō*

Which means to lead forward, to go ahead.

What English word does this sound like?

Progress, progressive

What do you think of when you hear the word ‘progressive.’

Well, theologically, the heretics were teaching a progressive form of Christianity that was not genuine Christianity at all. They were teaching ‘new’ knowledge that was (supposedly) “advanced” beyond the revelation of Jesus Himself.

“The teaching” = Grk “didache” which sounds like - What?

Didactic = designed or intended to teach

There was a book written in the late 90’s called the *Didache, the Teaching of the 12 Apostles*

What is “the teaching of Christ?”

I think it’s both the correct doctrine of Christ (The God-Man) and His teaching (e.g., Jn 13:34).

“of Christ” is literally “of *the* Christ.” This is the only time this phrase occurs in John’s writings. What do you think it means?

His role as God’s Chosen Messiah is being emphasized. God’s agent of revelation; John hangs the validity of Christianity on the truthfulness of that message.

And what is the negative result?

‘does not have God’

John says that anyone who progresses beyond the Christ’s revealed message is truly dead, separated from God for eternity.

In spite of his professed advanced knowledge of God, he does not possess the true God as his own God. As John Stott writes:

Does not possess Him in his heart as a Being to adore, and trust, and to love.

His brilliant, sophisticated speculation about God fails to bring him in a personal relationship with God.

To quote Stott again:

To deny the Son is to forfeit the Father. This is as true today of all non-Christian religions as it was of Cerinthian Gnosticism in the first century.

The positive side of this verse:

the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

John identifies the true believer as the one remaining true to the apostolic message concerning the incarnate Christ. His fidelity to this truth does not mean that his spiritual life is sterile; rather the truth to which he remains faithful motivates and vitalizes his character and conduct.

Unlike the heretics, his growing Christian experience is – to quote Stott once more – “rooted in the historical events of the incarnation and the atonement, the revelation and redemption which were finished in Christ.”

One’s adherence to the authentic message of Christianity assures that one “has both the Father and the Son.” It is impossible to separate the Father from the Son in Christian experience. Notice how John changes from the abstract “God” to the personal term “Father,” pointing to the intimate family relationship we can experience through His Son. See 1 Jn 1:3.