

## 2 JOHN: OVERCOMING MISLEADING ERROR ON THE LIMITS OF GOD'S FELLOWSHIP

### Part II: Setting The Boundaries Of True Fellowship Against Ruinous Frauds

(2 John :7-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 et al.)

#### I. Introduction

- A. True spiritual fellowship with God and God's people is so rewarding, no believer should want it to be ruined by the intrusion of deceptive and false infiltrators of the faith.
- B. 2 John verses 7-13 *follows* John's presentation of the **value** of that true fellowship by calling for specific boundaries in the church that believers must set up to protect the body against such intrusions:

#### II. Setting The Boundaries Of True Fellowship Against Ruinous Frauds, 2 Jn. 7-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15 et al.

- A. John advocated drawing a line of **first degree separation** from **apostates** to protect church fellowship:
  - 1. John revealed a great threat of false apostates existed for which the Church was to be wary:
    - a. He noted that many deceivers had already gone out into the world, men who did not confess as their own belief (*homologountes* = to acknowledge, publicly declare, cf. U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966 ed., p. 827; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 449) the Jesus Christ **IS come** (present tense, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to 2 John verse 7) in the flesh.
    - b. The present tense for **IS come** implies "the **past coming of Christ in the flesh at the incarnation**, the **present continuance of His risen humanity** , as well as His **future coming to earth**," Ibid.
  - 2. Accordingly, John warned us to watch that we not let ourselves be diluted by such parties, that we not "fudge" on these precious doctrines lest we lose God's reward, 2 John 8!
  - 3. Indeed, John revealed that whoever does not remain in these doctrines of Christ's incarnation, His bodily resurrection and future coming to earth, but goes on ahead to slip out of them in some way does not have the Lord, a very serious charge, 2 John 9!
  - 4. To protect the local body against infiltrators who might influence believers to "fudge" on these beliefs and thus to lose their reward of Christian living and service before the Lord, John advocated his readers deny fellowship to those who did not acknowledge the truth, but who held to such errors as follows:
    - a. John stated that if anyone approached to minister unto them who did **NOT acknowledge** Christ is God come in the flesh, His bodily resurrection or His return to the earth, he was not to be received into the building nor be given an encouraging greeting, 2 John 10.
    - b. The cause of denying even the greeting was that such a greeting encouraged the false teacher, and that made the one giving the encouragement a participant in his evil deeds, 2 John 11!
- B. Related to this call, Scripture also calls for a line of **second degree separation** from **EVEN fellow believers** whose fellowship is not in the light to the degree it harms the Church (as follows):
  - 1. Paul urged godly believers to pull back from carnal believers whose sinful lives could influence the body of believers readily to sin, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13, 14-15.
  - 2. Specific lines of such separation are detailed for us in the New Testament on two levels (as follows):
    - a. The Church must **excommunicate** believers who (a) hold an errant Gospel of salvation (Gal. 1:8-9 with 5:2 and 3:3), who (b) commit immorality, covetousness, idolatry, slander, substance abuse and extortion (1 Cor. 5:10-13) and who (c) create harmful, godless divisions in the church, Tit. 3:10-11.
    - b. On a **lesser** plane, we must **personally pull back** from believers who exhibit interpersonal spiritual toxicity, from those who are self-centered, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, injurious in speech, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, heartless, irreconcilable, slanderous, lacking self-control, untamed, despisers of the good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure over loving God and having an outward appearance of godliness but denying its true spiritual dynamics, 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

**Lesson:** As the **FELLOWSHIP** we enjoy with God as a body is **BASED on CORRECT BELIEFS**, to **PROTECT** the local church from destructive false beliefs and from those who can influence others to false beliefs and their destructive products, **BOUNDARIES** are needed: (1) **first degree separation** is needed to keep apostates out of the body who do not acknowledge Christ's incarnation, His bodily resurrection or His bodily return to earth. (2) **Second degree separation from believers** is needed to (a) **excommunicate** those who hold to an errant Gospel or commit highly influential sins or create evil divisions, and (b) **shrinking back** is needed from those who exhibit interpersonal spiritual toxicity!