

The Bulletin

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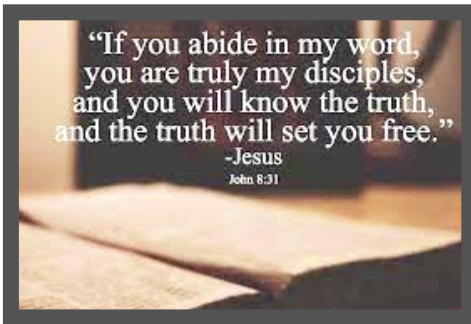
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“Abiding In The Doctrine”

by James R. Cope



Some who have had a great deal to say about "fellowship" have sought to lessen the force of II John 9-11 by giving it a meaning out of harmony both with its context and other plain Bible teaching. The passage reads:

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is a partaker of his evil deeds."

Position Proves Too Much:

Brethren who believe that everybody ever baptized for remission of sins ought to be in full fellowship with each other tell us that the "doctrine" of verses 9 and 10 refers to "*Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*" of vs. 7. The absurdity of such an

interpretation is seen in its consequences. This position would mean that he that abideth in the "doctrine", i.e., "*Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*", "*hath both the Father and the Son*."

This conclusion forces the position that any who acknowledge the deity of Jesus or regard Him as God's Son have fellowship with the Father and Son and with one another. Since there are many who have never obeyed the gospel -- have never been baptized for remission of sins -- yet who believe "*Jesus Christ has come in the flesh*", they must be in fellowship with all who have!

But this is too much for and unacceptable to these brethren because they draw the line of fellowship at "*baptism for remission of sins*." Some of the most able defenders of the Scripture teaching on the deity of Jesus have been men who never obeyed the gospel. Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists and Roman Catholics can be numbered by the thousands who believe "*that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*." Then why not fellowship them? The proof test of these liberals does not mention baptism. Why, then, draw the line of fellowship at baptism?

Everybody knows that one cannot deny the deity of Jesus and be saved, but a mere acknowledgement of His deity does not guarantee salvation. "*Among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*" (John 12:42,43). Were these "chief rulers" saved? Certainly they recognized His deity, i.e., "*that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*." Then how could they, if living today, or their kind who do live now, be withheld "fellowship?"

The strained interpretation these men place upon the passage under consideration sounds a great deal like denominational preachers' use of passages which mention that we are saved by faith and from which they seek to establish the doctrine of salvation by "faith only." Denominationalists do this to avoid the force of other passages which teach the necessity of being baptized or doing what God commands. These liberalists on "fellowship" among us seek to confine the "doctrine of Christ" to His coming "in the flesh" rather than to the entire New Testament teaching for the same reason, i.e. there are numerous precepts within the "doctrine" taught by Christ through His apostles which show obligation of Christians to "*receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed*" who "*abideth not in the doctrine*" taught by Christ through His apostles.

The deity of Jesus is that which gives credibility to His authority for His claim to "*all authority in heaven and on earth*" grows out of and rests upon His deity, but multiplied thousands have been convinced of His deity who rejected His authority for "*he that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar; and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk, even as He walked*" (I John 2:4-6). "*But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus*

Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). There must be walking as He also walked, there must be walking "in the light as He is in the light" for the "fellowship" which God approved to exist, and this walking and this fellowship obviously involve more than abiding in the doctrine "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."

Connecting Scriptures:

This is not all. The apostle John makes a direct connection between walking "after His commandments" in vs. 8 and abiding "in the doctrine of Christ" in vs. 9. In vs. 6, he says, "And this is love, that ye walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." The commandment "heard from the beginning" is clearly "that ye walk after His commandments." Obedience to His commandments admits recognition of His authority, but there were deceivers who sought to destroy faith in the deity of Jesus by denying "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh"; hence, John's admonition concerning Christ was to urge the disciples not to be led into unbelief by these "deceivers" whom he also identifies as "anti-christ" (vs. 7).

It is likely that John had in mind the Great Commission wherein the Lord had said to teach those baptized "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 18:20). If so, it was the "great salvation" of Hebrews 2:3 which "began to be spoken by the Lord" and was "heard" by Paul, John, and the other apostles from the time it began to be spoken and which "the elect lady and her children" (vs. 1) had "heard from the beginning" of their own contact with gospel teachers.

The force of John's reasoning then is this: if it be not admitted that Jesus is divine, His authority and hence obedience to His commandments are useless; thus the apostle's exhortation in verse 8 "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward", followed by the declaration of verse 9 concerning transgressing and abiding "not in the doctrine of Christ." In other words, if it be denied that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" there is no basis in fact for obeying His commandments, but since "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" and has thus established His authority and right to issue commandments, disciple need to obey Him implicitly in everything He teaches that they may have "both the Father and the Son" and "receive a full reward."

Paul pursues a similar vein of thought in I Corinthians 15:58 involving the practical aspects of the resurrection of the dead. It is in view of the resurrection of Christ which vouchsafes the Christian's resurrection that he exhorted, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." John reasons that since "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh"—Christians should abide in His teaching.

Identity Of "The Doctrine":

But this is not all yet. There are numerous passages which teach the absolute necessity of saints abiding in the "doctrine of Christ", "the apostles' doctrine" ... the doctrine taught by Christ through the apostles. That the two are identical is readily discerned from the following passages. Nobody understands "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) to mean the doctrine about the apostles yet it may be properly rendered "the doctrine of the apostles." The apostles were "ambassadors for Christ" to whom God "committed the word of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:19,20). The "word of reconciliation" was the gospel. It involves more than the coming of Christ in the flesh (see I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Acts 13:7 says Sergius Paulus "desired to hear the Word of God" but 13:12 declares he was "astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." Was he astonished that Jesus Christ had "come in the flesh?" The Jewish council said to the apostles, "Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine" (Acts 5:28). These rulers understood the apostles' "doctrine" to be identical with their "teaching" by Christ's authority.

Paul's charge in Romans 16:17 is on the same point: "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (This is precisely the word used in II John 9,10). Romans 16:18 shows the "good words and fair speeches" of these trouble makers to be the cause of the "divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine", not that Christ had come in the flesh only but the commands He had given through them. "For", says Paul, "your obedience is come abroad unto all men."

Finally, it is singular indeed that not once in the entire New Testament is the word translated "doctrine" in II John 9 ever made to mean the substance of the teaching, but, on the contrary, without exception it refers to the act of teaching. Twenty-nine times the word occurs in the text and twenty-nine times, whether translated "doctrine" or "teaching", it signifies the act, not the substance. Another word is used by the Holy Spirit when the substance of the "doctrine" is intended.

These heralds of fellowship need to get passages which will justify their position if they intend to take in everybody who will be "taken in" by them. II John 9-11 denies them the very plea they make for fellowship. This being true it is not difficult to understand why they seek to "explain away" its obvious import. Such has ever been and shall continue to be the course of false teachers.

(via The Preceptor, Vol. 1, No. 6, April 1952.)



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And Our Facebook Page.

For sermon videos, articles, and announcements.

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Danny Cottrell, Gary Doles, Joe Felks, Randy Beaty, Brandon Briggs & Bentley Briggs, Russell Briggs, Briley Briggs, Blake Briggs, and Stephanie Briggs.

Sherry Doles still needs our prayers in her recovery process, she went to the ER last Sunday for fluid in her lung.

Sam Johnson, and Fred's grandson Mason.

“What Are We Ashamed Of?”

Lesson Text: Psalm 25:1-3.

I. What is Shame?

“a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety.”

Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

ADJECTIVE: ASHAMED

“EMBARRASSED OR GUILTY BECAUSE OF ONE'S ACTIONS, CHARACTERISTICS, OR ASSOCIATIONS.” (WEBSTER)

Hebrew word— boshet “shame” shameful thing *This word means a “shameful thing” as a substitute for the name Baal: “For shame hath devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth ...” (Jer. 3:24; cf. Jer. 11:13; Hos. 9:10). This substitution also occurs in proper names: Ish-bosheth (2 Sam. 2:8), the “man of shame,” was originally Esh-baal (cf. 1 Chron. 8:33), the “man of Baal.” This word represents both “shame and worthlessness” (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Vol. 1, p. 227).*

aischuno (αἰσχύνωμαι, 153), from *aischos*, “shame,” always used in the passive voice, signifies (a) “to have a feeling of fear or shame which prevents a person from doing a thing,” e.g., Luke 16:3; (b) “the feeling of shame arising from something that has been done,” e.g., 2 Cor. 10:8; Phil. 1:20; 1 John 2:28, of the possibility of being “ashamed” before the Lord Jesus at His judgment seat in His Parousia with His saints; in 1 Pet. 4:16, of being ashamed of suffering as a Christian.¶ (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Vol. 2, p. 39).

II. What Brings Us Shame?

- 1. Proverbs 10:5; 18:13; 19:26.**
- 2. Luke 14:9; Luke 16:3.**
- 3. 2 Thessalonians 3:14.**

— Sin; Iniquity; Disobedience...

- 1. Genesis 3:6-10 (See also 2:25 for contrast).**
- 2. Proverbs 14:34.**

disgrace (act) — “an act that causes disgrace and shame to come upon someone.”

- 3. Ephesians 5:11-12; Romans 1:24; Philippians 3:18-19;**
- 4. Jeremiah 8:12; Ezra 9:6-7; Romans 6:19-23.**

III. What We Should Never Be Ashamed of!

- 1. Our Faith in Christ— Mark 8:38; Romans 1:14-17; Philippians 1:20-21.**
- 2. Our Brethren (the church)— 2 Timothy 1:8; 16-18; 1 Peter 1:22.**
- 3. Our Suffering For His Name— 1 Peter 4:12-16; Acts 5:40-42;
2 Timothy 1:12.**
- 4. Our Good Conduct in Christ—2 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Peter 3:15-16;
Titus 2:8; 1 John 2:28-29.**