

2John – Week 2

I. Quick review of last class

A. The two main points of this short epistle is:

- i. We are to walk in love and this means keeping God's commandments
- ii. We are not to encourage false teachers in any way.

B. 2John 1:1-3

- i. The elder is the apostle, John
- ii. The chosen lady appears to be addressing a local congregation
 1. The reasons:
 - a. Personification is not unusual in the Scriptures:
 - i. The church is personified as a bride (Ephesians 5:25-27; 2Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-9)
 - ii. Wisdom is personified as a beautiful woman/sister (Proverbs 3:13-15, 7:4, 9:1)
 - b. Also:
 - i. In verse 8, the plural pronoun "yourselves" is used
 - ii. And in verses 10 and 12, the Greek words "humas" and "humin" translate into the plural form of "you."
 - iii. We learned that this sister congregation was loved by John and all who knew the truth

C. 2John 1:4, "*I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.*"

1. There is great joy when one hears of congregations striving to live faithfully to the Word of God
 - a. So many church leaders today are tampering with God's Word in order to "fit in" today's culture.
2. "*...to find some of your children walking in the truth*" can either mean...
 - a. John, perhaps, personally knew some members of that congregation who were actively walking in the truth
 - b. Although John knew that some converts were lead away by heresy (Gnosticism), the church was still faithful to the truth.

D. 2John 1:5-6, "*And now I ask you, dear lady— not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning— that we love one another. ⁶And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.*"

- i. Here, John encourages the congregation with the same encouragement he gave to his readers of 1John (1John 2:7-8; 3:11,23;5:3)
- ii. This is a reference to John 13:34-35, where Jesus commands His disciples to love one another as He has loved them.
- iii. A matter of balance:
 1. Christian congregations must be known for their love without neglecting God's other commandments
 - a. Consider the church at Sardis:
 - i. Revelation 3:1-3, "*And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. 'I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ²Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. ³Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.'*"

1. Sardis seemed to be a church with a good reputation in the community
 2. It seemed to be a perfect model of “inoffensive Christianity.”
 3. In the eyes of men, they were alive and “loving;” but in the eyes of the Lord, they were dead.
2. Christian congregations must be known for their adherence to God’s commandments without neglecting love
 - a. Consider the Pharisees:
 - i. Matthew 23:23, “*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.*”
 1. The Law required tithing: although the Law mentioned nothing about tithing herb, the Pharisees went as far as to tithe their mint, dill and cumin.
 2. Jesus acknowledged that attention be given even to the smallest part of the Law, but not at the expense of justice, mercy and faithfulness.
- E. 1John 1:7, “*For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.*”
- i. As we learned in 1John, the deceiver and the antichrist are referring to the Gnostics of John’s day.
 1. The Gnostics did not believe Jesus came in the flesh.
- F. 1John 1:8, “*Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.*”
- i. “*Watch yourselves...*”
 1. This phrase, again, shows that John was not writing to a literal woman, but a group of people
 2. The danger is real: Christians must secure their hearts from following erroneous teachings by those who deceive.
 - a. **Question: Name some practical ways a congregation can avoid the consequences of verse 8?**
 - i. Know your Bible well (Psalm 119:11; Col. 3:16)
 - ii. Impress the Word of God within the hearts of those you teach (Duet. 6:6-7; Matthew 28:20)
 - iii. Appoint teachers with great care
 1. Those teaching/preaching at the pulpit should be men who are solid in the truth.
 2. Guest preachers/teachers should be known to be solid in the truth.
 - iv. Make disciples aware of the false teachings being circulated in the religious world.
3. Each congregation is like a mission team: reaching the community with the gospel
 - a. If a congregation, beginning with its leaders, does not protect itself from heretics, the deceivers will draw members to themselves. This is what was meant by the phrase: “*so that you may not lose what we have worked for.*”
 - b. Consider the warning of Paul to the Ephesians in Acts 20:28-31