

— 2 John —
Lesson #4 Chapter 1:7-13

As we look at John's final thoughts to his friends, ask the Lord to help you study His Word without distraction and with a heart eager to discover what He has preserved for you to know about Him!

1. John begins verse 7 with "for" (except in the NIV and HCSB), which links his new thoughts to what he just said in the previous verses about walking in the truth and in love. What is the *connection* between John's new subject in verse 7 and his previous subject in verses 1-6?
2. What do you learn about *deceivers* from verse 7? Review the following Scriptures and summarize what else John taught about deceivers. See 1 John 2:19, 26; 3:7-8; 4:1; 2 John 7-8.
3. Where are the false teachers headed according to verse 7? How does their *destination* reveal their spiritual state (verse 7)?
4. John also points out that the thing deceivers fail to acknowledge *also* reveals their true spiritual state. What don't they acknowledge (ESV; NKJV; HCSB *confess*) according to verse 7?
5. Why is it so important to trust that Jesus came in the flesh? See Colossians 2:8-10; Hebrews 2:14-15, 17; 10:4-5, 10, 19-20; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 4:1-6.

“The negative with the present-tense participle portrays their practice of openly avoiding a direct denial of the incarnation, but they were subtle enough to counterfeit that basic apostolic teaching through the teaching they brought. *What a professed Christian teacher deliberately refuses to acknowledge in dealing with doctrinal matters may be just as revealing as what he openly rejects.* The refusal of these false teachers to acknowledge that Jesus Christ “is come in the flesh” was in fact a repudiation of that concept. In 1 John 4:2 John’s use of the perfect tense, “that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (NASB), sets forth the fact of the incarnation as an abiding historical reality. Here his use of the present tense indicates that these heretics deny the possibility of the incarnation. In either case the basic error of the heretics was their refusal to accept the permanent union of the divine and the human natures in Jesus Christ.” ~D. Edmond Hiebert¹

“By the birth of Christ, God also glorified the severity of His justice. His Son must rather take flesh and die than His mercy remain unsatisfied. The justice of God was more fully satisfied in Christ than if it had seized upon the offenders themselves. Man is finite, and cannot bear the utmost severity of divine wrath.”
~Ezekiel Hopkins²

6. In what ways do the deceivers deceive us? See Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:3-6; Titus 1:10-11, 16; 1 John 1:8; 2:22; 3:7-8.

7. What final indictment is leveled at those who do not acknowledge Jesus as coming in the flesh? See the end of verse 7. Review and list what we’ve learned about antichrists from John in 1 John 2:18-24; 4:1-6.

8. What command is given in verse 8? The verb tense in the command indicates this is something we are *always* to be doing. What danger is presented as a reason for obeying this command (verse 8)? What motivation for obeying this command is given at the end of verse 8?

¹ Hiebert, D. Edmond. 1991. *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press.

² John Flavel, Richard Rushing, editor, *Voices from the Past, Volume 2* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 364-365.

9. John's concern highlights how all believers must watch out for and be on guard against false teaching. What do you learn about this important aspect of the Christian life from Ephesians 4:14; 5:6; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; Hebrews 10:35; 2 Peter 3:14-18; Jude 3-4; Revelation 3:11.
10. The Christian life is a life of growth, momentum, and progress in the faith. One of the means God uses to transform us into His image are faithful preachers, teachers, and godly mentors who impart the truths of God's Word to us to help us grow in grace. In verse 8, we are warned to continually watch ourselves that we won't be swayed by false teaching to the point that we lose what has been accomplished or built into us.
- John, Paul, and the author of Hebrews all admonish believers on this subject as a way of motivating and encouraging them to be faithful to the end. Look up the following Scriptures and record anything you find interesting about finishing well, the way it was accomplished, how the authors viewed their labors, or anything else. See 2 Corinthians 11:2-3; Galatians 4:8-11; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5 (for the context of these statements read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10); Hebrews 3:6, 14, 10:35-39 (for the context of these statements read Hebrews 10:32-34).
11. We must also consider our response to those who so faithfully pour into us—*for our good and often at cost to themselves*. How are you responding to the modeling and teaching given to you? How can you bless and encourage those who have labored to instill and model God's Word to you?

"Smith explains: 'We have worked together: see that you do not forfeit the reward of your labor. Get a full wage. Be not like workmen who toward the close of the day fall off, doing their work badly or losing time, and get less than a day's pay... We have been fellow-workers thus far, and I mean to be faithful to the last: see that you also be so.' He adds, 'Their danger lay in taking up with false teaching and losing the comfort of the gospel in its simplicity and fulness.' *Translation* [of verse 8]. Ever be keeping a watchful eye upon yourselves in order that you do not lose the things we accomplished, but that you receive a full reward." ~Kenneth Wuest³

³ Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 14. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

12. We don't often talk about rewards, though the writers of Scripture aren't embarrassed to do so. What do you learn about rewards and what leads to losing them from 1 Corinthians 3:8-15; 4:5; 15:58; Galatians 6:4, 7-9; Colossians 3:23-24; Hebrews 11:6; Revelation 22:12.

13. In verse 9 John describes how people can get to the place where they lose their reward. What do you learn from verse 9 about that process?

14. How do the following words from Puritan pastor, Thomas Lye, help us live out the warning given in verse 9? Thomas Lye said, "Where God does not find a mouth to speak, you must not find an ear to hear, nor a heart to believe."⁴

15. John 8:31, 1 John 2:22-24, and 5:1-4 also address the issues found in 2 John 9. What added information or confirming truths do you find in those texts?

16. John points out that the false teachers "go too far" in their teaching, adding to, subtracting from, or departing completely from the Scriptures. What counsel is given in the Word of God for dealing with those who "go too far" in their teaching? First, see 2 John 10-11, then look at 1 Timothy 6:3-5, then for the solution refer to 1 Timothy 6:11-14; after that you can go to 2 Timothy 1:13-15; 3:13-17; 4:3-5; Hebrews 3:12-13; 3 John 9-11; Jude 17-23.

⁴ Thomas Lye, in his final sermon before he was ejected from his pulpit in 1662, along with 2000 other ministers of the gospel, who for conscience' sake rejected the Church of England's Act of Uniformity, which required unstinting and wholehearted use of the newly minted Book of Common Prayer. Iain Murray, *Sermons of the Great Ejection* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1962, reprinted 2020), 129.

17. How is the counsel different for dealing with a false teacher versus an uninformed or untrained teacher? Compare the verses from the question above to what we see in Acts 18:24-26; Colossians 2:6-8; 1 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 1:9-11; 2:1, 15.
18. Knowing what we know about false teachers, how is it a protection for you and your family when you do not receive or show hospitality to a known false teacher? See 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; 1 Timothy 5:22; Titus 1:10-11. What should you do if you extend hospitality to someone *and then* discover they are false teachers? See verses 10-11.

“John’s stern prohibition must be seen in the light of the occasion he had in mind. It states the needed Christian reaction when confronted with the efforts of one furthering soul-destroying heresy. It does not restrict the practice of hospitality and Christian love when no heretical proselyting intentions are involved. . . . In a day when there is a diminishing sense of the danger of open heresy, the tendency is to tolerate known heresy for the sake of unity.” ~D. Edmond Hiebert⁵

“Robertson says: ‘It is to be borne in mind that the churches often met in private homes (Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15), and if these travelling deceivers were allowed to spread their doctrines in these homes and then sent on with endorsement as Apollos was from Ephesus and Corinth (Acts 18:27), there was no way of escaping responsibility for the harm wrought by these propagandists of evil. It is not a case of mere hospitality to strangers.’” ~Kenneth Wuest⁶

19. How does John close his letter to his dear friends in verses 12-13? What do you notice about the nature of true Christian fellowship from those verses?
20. What are some ways you can develop a love for and enjoyment in the people of God according to what we’ve learned from John? See 1 John 1:3-4, 7; 2:10; 3:2-3, 10, 14-16, 17-18; 4:21.

⁵ Hiebert, D. Edmond. 1991. *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press.

⁶ Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 14. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

21. How would you sum up what you've learned from 2 John?

“A Saviour not quite God is a bridge broken at the farther end.” ~Bishop Moule⁷

“On all these accounts he urges his friends to keep close to Christ by keeping close to the truth. For us today the same message is appropriate and necessary. We can only abide in the Incarnate Word in proportion as we keep close to the written Word of God. Thus we shall keep close to God and to all that is good.” ~Thomas Griffith⁸

“Excavations at the ancient city of Pompeii have revealed many historical insights and some stirring examples of faithfulness. When Mt. Vesuvius erupted and destroyed the city, many people were buried in the ruins. Some were found in cellars, as if they had gone there for safety. Some were found in the upper rooms of buildings, probably for the same reason. One Roman sentinel was found standing at the city gate where he had been placed by the captain, with his hand still grasping his weapon. There, while the earth shook beneath him—there while the floods of ashes and cinders covered him—he had stood at his post. There, after a thousand years, his faithfulness was revealed.

That is how faithful we are to be to Jesus and his truth. We are not to be deceived by those who would sway us from the truth. We are to stand firm, strong, and resolute. When Jesus comes, or when we go to meet him, we are to be found at our post with our weapons in our hands, believing the truth and living the truth.” ~Holman New Testament Commentary⁹

⁷ Thomas, W. H. Griffith. n.d. *The Apostle John: Studies in His Life and Writings*. London; Glasgow; Edinburgh: Pickering & Inglis.

⁸ Thomas, W. H. Griffith. n.d. *The Apostle John: Studies in His Life and Writings*. London; Glasgow; Edinburgh: Pickering & Inglis.

⁹ Walls, David, and Max Anders. 1999. *I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude*. Vol. 11. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.