

Many Sparrows

By Joshua Carter

When Jesus sent his apostles out to preach, He warned them that they would be going out into a world that would reject them. They would be like “sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matthew 10:16). They would meet people who wouldn’t listen to them or receive them. They would be falsely accused of doing wrong. They would be hated. They would even be killed.

Yet, after all of these warnings, Jesus’ conclusion to them was not, “So I understand if you’re sort of timid about all this.” He said, “So have no fear of them” because they can “kill the body but [they] cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:26, 28). That alone should put our fears of evangelism into perspective. If the apostles weren’t to fear people who might kill their bodies, what do you think Jesus would say about fearing people who might hurt our feelings?

But there’s another aspect to this charge in the subsequent verses, when Jesus explains His reasoning.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father... Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:29, 31).

God cares about you. He watches everything that’s going on in your life and there is nothing that He doesn’t know about. Even the seemingly insignificant sparrows don’t escape our Heavenly Father’s attention. And you are worth more than many sparrows. You mean a lot to God.

Here’s what we need to realize, though- Jesus speaks of not one, but two sparrows. God cares just as much about one of them as He does the other. Neither lives outside of the scope of His concern and neither dies without His knowledge. If you’re worth more than many sparrows, so are all the people you’re around every day.

Evangelism is where our righteous fear and God’s vigilant compassion come together. When we begin to appreciate both aspects of our relationship with the Father, that’s when we’ll begin to boldly and persistently tell others about the kingdom of heaven. It’s not enough to fear God for ourselves. We need to learn to fear God for other people, too. We are not the only ones worth more than many sparrows.

Father, help us to see people the way You see them. Teach us how much a soul is worth in Your loving eyes.



Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Yolanda Stewart (Michael Bassie's Sister)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Toni Herd	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Holly Law
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Ellie Vaughn (Scott and Genna's baby)

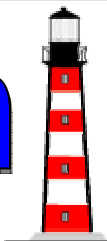
July Birthdays

- 3-Nathan Rouse
- 6-Nathan Bradshaw
- 8-David DeFoor
- 11-Chase Winslett
- 11-Madi White
- 11-Hope Walker
- 11-Clay Morris
- 11-Kelsey Gallahar
- 11-Caroline Meadows
- 14-Laurel Jerkins
- 14-Megan Ryan
- 15-Bradley Seymore
- 15-Winston Atnip
- 18-Kerrie Hornback
- 19-Ben Holcomb
- 19-Jay Borden
- 21-Tori Luther
- 25-Betty Bradford
- 25-Yvette Rouse
- 26-Brandon Hester
- 28-Jacob Bradshaw
- 29-Hayden Phillips
- 30-Brittney Arnett

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers our expectant mother, Nicole Pender!
- ☒ - Please keep the Tam's in your prayers as they are away in China.
- ☒ - Pray for the Mauldin family at the loss of Owen. His funeral was last Wed. After the funeral Dean Mauldin, Leon's mother, had a fall and passed away on Saturday.
- ☒ - There will be a gospel meeting at Prattmont with Harold Hancock this week, Sun - Fri!
- ☒ - Remember our upcoming meeting with Paul Earnhart, August 23-27!
- ☒ - Please pray for the Harold Carswell family as they are caring for his sister in their home.
- ☒ - The ladies class will be this Thursday. At 7 PM at Carmen Herd's home on "heaven."
- ☒ - Please pray for Troy's father, Jesse Godwin (Mac's grandfather) who is in the hospital in Prattville for a back issue.
- ☒ - Group meetings will be tonight!
- ☒ - Scott Perkins' dad, Joe is not doing well.
- ☒ - David Ogle had ablation at UAB this week and is doing well.
- ☒ - Congrats to our graduates: Mac Searcy, Logan Dean, Kalee Reid., Bradley Seymore.
- ☒ - All audio is immediately uploaded to www.auchurch.com.

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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2 John 9 - An Abused Passage

By Wayne Jackson



Thoughts to Ponder

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

(2 John 9)

Towards the conclusion of his second epistle, the apostle John wrote: "Whoever goes onward, and abides not in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. . . ." (v. 9).

In recent years, this passage has become the focus of stormy controversy. The significance of the passage has been distorted seriously — both by those on the liberal “left,” and others on the radical “right.”

A small minority has contended that virtually every disagreement over the meaning of scripture falls within the scope of 2 John 9 (e.g., the Bible version one uses, or whether or not a congregation may have a refrigerator in the church building). A growing, “progressive” segment alleges that the passage is directed to a first-century heresy that opposed the teaching that Jesus came to earth “in the flesh.”

Typical of this latter viewpoint is an essay titled, “2 John 9 And Christian Fellowship,” that appears in the book, The Peaceable Kingdom (Abilene, TX: Restoration Perspectives, 1993, pp. 71-92). This volume was authored by Carroll D. Osburn, a Bible professor at Abilene Christian University.

Osburn charges that the traditional manner in which some have appealed to this passage “to eliminate from fellowship anyone with whom one disagrees” has become a “hermeneutical nightmare.” One might be inclined to agree — if the “anyone-with-whom-one-

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disagrees” charge represented a significant reality. The problem is that Osburn, and those of his “hermeneutic” mentality, disavow that this passage has any applicability to their ambitious agenda of extending full fellowship to various sectarian bodies of “Christendom.”

The professor makes it clear that, in his judgment, the threshold for Christian fellowship is merely the conviction “that Christ is the Son of God” (p. 90). Such matters as observing weekly communion, the use of instrumental music in worship, the dogma of premillennialism, or, for that matter, whether baptism is “for,” or “because of,” the remission of sins, are issues of no serious consequence to him. He would throw wide open the doors of Christian fellowship to those who sub-

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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scribe to any of these notions. And he is a teacher of our youth!

The Text

Let us consider some elements of **2 John 9**.

1. The term “whoever” means anyone or everyone (cf. **John 3:16; Revelation 22:18**).

2. “Goes onward” (proagon) signifies to “take the lead, to move ahead” (F.W. Danker, et al., Greek-English Lexicon, 2000, p. 864). The present tense form suggests persistent movement in the wrong direction.

3. “Abides not” (present tense) reflects the negative side of the digression. To go forward, is to not remain, within the prescribed boundary.

Then there is the controversial phrase “the teaching of Christ.” The chief point of contention involves the meaning of tou Christou, “of Christ.” In the Greek Testament, the phrase is in the genitive case, which, generally, is viewed as the case of “possession.” The matter is more complex, however, in that the genitive is “more elastic” than any other Greek case, covering a wide range of semantic relationships (Daniel Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, Zondervan, 1996, pp. 74-75). Wallace lists no fewer than 33 uses of the genitive in the N.T.

The battle has raged mostly over whether or not the genitive of **2 John 9** is “objective” or “subjective.” If it is construed as objective, the phrase means “the teaching about Christ.” If it is viewed as subjective, the sense is “Christ’s teaching,” i.e., that which comes from him.

Any serious student of the Greek New Testament knows that this issue is not so much a matter of grammar in this case, as it is a matter of exegesis (see A.T. Robertson, Historical Grammar, Hodder & Stoughton, 1919, p. 499). In other words, context will be the decisive factor in providing direction for the interpretation of the phrase.

In the process of biblical exegesis, the term “context” is employed in two senses. It has to do with the immediate setting of a passage; it also relates to the general teaching of the Scriptures related to the subject.

Osburn concedes that some very respectable Greek scholars are persuaded that the genitive in **2 John 9** is subjective, i.e., the teaching from Christ. He mentions the names of A.T. Robertson, B.F. Wescott and A.E. Brook. He could have added: J.H. Thayer, G. Abbott-Smith, Edward Robinson, John Stott, R.C.H. Lenski, and a great host of others. The late J.W.

Roberts noted: “Undoubtedly the majority of commentators are on the side of the subjective genitive” (The Letters of John, Sweet, 1968, p. 164).

But here is a crucial question. Is there anything — in either scripture or logic — that would lead one to the conclusion that he must believe the “teaching about Christ,” namely, that Jesus once lived on earth “in the flesh,” but that he is free to disregard the “teaching from Christ,” e.g., that which provides direction in worship, the plan of salvation, eschatology, etc.? Does that make any sense at all? And yet Osburn claims that an application of 2 John 9 to such matters reflects a “sectarian” disposition (p. 73).

Logical Implications

If the expression “teaching of Christ” in 2 John 9 is exclusively a warning about denying “the doctrine of the incarnation,” i.e., the truth that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (Osburn, pp. 82-83), the following conclusion would appear to follow. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, Unitarians, and a wide variety of modernists must not be excluded from Christian fellowship, because all these folks subscribe to the idea that Jesus of Nazareth lived in the flesh. The Watchtower people argue that he was “nothing more than a perfect man,” but they do not repudiate his fleshly nature.

Even modernists believe that a man named “Jesus” lived twenty centuries ago, and that, in “some sense,” he was divine. They repudiate, however, the fact that he was born of the virgin, that he performed miracles, or that he was raised from the dead. Why would it be more serious to deny Christ’s human nature than to repudiate the evidences of his divine essence?

But our brother admits that a rejection of “Jesus as Lord” is included in this warning. How does he arrive at this conclusion? He goes outside of 2 John, and imports material from 1 John (**2:22; 4:2,15**) to support his argument (p. 88). Very well, comparisons are a legitimate methodology. It is hardly consistent, however, for Osburn to do precisely that, and then criticize others (pp. 74ff) who have called attention to the use of the subjective genitive in connection with the Lord’s “teaching” in John’s Gospel record, and in the book of Revelation (see **John 7:17; 18:19; cf. 1 John 1:5; Revelation 2:14-15**).

The problem with these brethren is not grammar; it is “heart.” They have abandoned the ideal of restoring primitive Christianity. They covet fraternization with the sects, and want to take the whole brotherhood with them. But many refuse to go. May their numbers increase.



Are We Looking for Questions or Answers?

By Doy Moyer

My co-worker made an observation in a lesson on doubt that is worth further exploring. The idea is that there is a difference between the one who is constantly seeking questions and the one who is seeking answers. The following is not intended to be a list of hard rules with no exceptions. Rather, these are observations I have found to be fairly typical in my own experiences:

The question-seeker is rarely satisfied with any answers, but continually asks unanswerable questions.

The answer-seeker has questions, too, but is able to recognize legitimate answers and is happy to find them.

The question-seeker’s follow up is to the effect of, “Yeah, but what about...?” The answer-seeker’s follow up is to the effect of, “Now let me understand how to apply this.”

The question-seeker mistakes a search for questions with a humble search for truth.

The answer-seeker finds truth through humble acceptance of legitimate answers.

The question-seeker looks for clever ways to ask the questions so as to stump others.

The reader will probably be able to think of more contrasts, but the question I need to ask myself is simple: am I a question-seeker or an answer-seeker?

The answer-seeker looks for clarity, not to stump anyone, but to lead to solid conclusions.

The question-seeker sees the questions as an end in themselves since no answers suffice.

The answer-seeker sees the questions as a means to find real an-

swers.

The question-seeker uses the lack of answers as a reason to raise doubts. The answer-seeker uses the lack of answers as a way keep seeking and finally trust in the One who does have the answers.

The question-seeker asks questions without learning much from them. The answer-seeker asks questions to foster learning.

The question-seeker uses unanswered questions to suspend judgment upon God and Christ.

The answer-seeker suspends judgment on an unanswered question, but can still trust God.

The reader will probably be able to think of more contrasts, but the question I need to ask myself is simple: am I a question-seeker or an answer-seeker?

