

2 John 1:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine,
receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

Analysis

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. John issues a controversial command: those who bring false doctrine about Christ should not be received into the house or greeted. "If there come any unto you" (Greek *ei tis erchetai pros hymas*, εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς) refers to itinerant teachers who traveled among churches seeking hospitality and a platform to teach. The early church relied on such teachers for instruction and encouragement, but this system also enabled false teachers to spread heresy.

"Bring not this doctrine" (Greek *tautēn tēn didachēn ou pherei*, ταύτην τὴν διδαχὴν οὐ φέρει) means failing to bring the apostolic teaching about Christ—specifically, the incarnation affirmed in verse 7. "Receive him not into your house" (Greek *mē lambanete auton eis oikian*, μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν) prohibits hospitality. Since houses were where churches met, this effectively bars false teachers from church fellowship and denies them platforms to promote error.

"Neither bid him God speed" (Greek *kai chairein autō mē legete*, καὶ χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε) means withholding the customary greeting (*chairein*, "rejoice" or "greetings"). Some interpret this as refusing any friendly interaction; others see it as specifically denying formal endorsement or partnership. Either way, John forbids actions that could be construed as approving or enabling false teaching. This is not personal hatred but protecting the church from spiritual poison. Those

who deny Christ's incarnation forfeit Christian fellowship, however sincere or likeable they may be personally.

Historical Context

In the first-century church, traveling teachers were common and necessary. Local churches often lacked mature leadership or written Scripture, depending on itinerant apostles, prophets, and teachers for instruction. Christian hospitality was both a virtue (Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Peter 4:9) and a practical necessity—teachers had no hotels and needed lodging and financial support.

However, this system was vulnerable to exploitation. The Didache (late first-century church manual) addresses protocols for receiving traveling teachers, including how to distinguish genuine from false teachers. False teachers could claim apostolic authority, appear sincere, and use Christian language while spreading destructive heresies. Unsuspecting believers might provide platform and endorsement to those undermining the gospel.

John's command protected churches from this threat. Denying hospitality wasn't merely withholding personal courtesy but refusing to aid false teaching's spread. Since house churches provided the venue for teaching and Lord's Supper fellowship, excluding false teachers from homes effectively prevented them from influencing the congregation. This set precedent for church discipline: those promoting false doctrine about Christ's person must be excluded from Christian fellowship, not to punish them personally but to protect the church and maintain gospel purity.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do we distinguish between showing common human kindness and providing specifically Christian endorsement or partnership?
2. What criteria should churches use to evaluate which teachers receive platforms, partnerships, or recommendations?
3. How can we practice this biblical discernment without becoming harshly judgmental or isolated from all outside influence?

Interlinear Text

εἷ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ταύτην τὴν διδαχὴν
G1487 G5100 **there come** G2064 **unto** G4314 **you** G5209 **and** G2532 G3778 G3588 **doctrine** G1322

οὐ φέρει μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτῷ εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ χαίρειν
not G3756 **bring** G5342 **not** G3361 **receive** G2983 **him** G846 **into** G1519 **your house** G3614 **and** G2532 **God speed** G5463

αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε·
him G846 **not** G3361 **bid** G3004

Additional Cross-References

Titus 3:10 (Parallel theme): A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

2 Thessalonians 3:6 (Parallel theme): Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

1 Corinthians 5:11 (Parallel theme): But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 (Parallel theme): And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

2 John 1:11 (References God): For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

1 Corinthians 16:22 (Parallel theme): If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

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