

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- BELIEVE – ACTS 16:31
- REPENT – ACTS 17:30; LUKE 13:3
- CONFESS – ROMANS 10:10; I TIMOTHY 6:12
- BE BAPTIZED – ACTS 2:38; MARK 16:16
- BE FAITHFUL – REVELATION 2:10

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North Ridgeville, OH 44039

Website: nrcoc.net

Times for Meeting

Lord's Day	9:30 AM	Bible Study (all ages)
	10:30 AM	Worship
Wednesday	7:00 PM	Bible Study (all ages)

Elders

Bruce Dean
Mark Ullman

Evangelist

Steven Wallace

THE NORTH RIDGEVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,
deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22

February 20, 2022

“What is the Doctrine of Christ?” (1)

Steven J. Wallace

“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).¹

For some, the doctrine of *fellowship* has been redefined into having joint participation of any kind of friendly secular act. It might be sharing a meal, playing golf, or going hiking together. Bible fellowship, however, is contained in and conditioned upon walking in the light (1 Jn. 1:7). Gospel fellowship is spiritually based. Some have become discontented with the demands of gospel fellowship and have set in order a new interpretation of 2 John 9 to change “the doctrine of Christ” to only “the doctrine about Christ.” Conveniently, differences over doctrinal areas that relate to the work and worship of the church, the plan of salvation, Christian conduct, and many other things can be ignored. A spiritually connection can remain in tact with those whom we differ. However, Jesus taught that teaching as doctrines the commandments of men results in vain worship (Matt. 15:9). God is clear on what He expects.

The *doctrine of Christ*, in this passage, is the link or grounds for fellowship with God. Opposing this doctrine, or going beyond this doctrine cancels out fellowship with God.

The *doctrine of Christ* is also something to “abide” in. To abide in it requires continued action. To abide in anything means boundaries are clear and well defined. So what is the “doctrine of Christ”?

Some say that the “doctrine of Christ” is limited only to the teaching that Jesus is the Christ who came in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:3; 2 Jn. 1:7). If this were the case, then why does John show that one can also breach fellowship with God by denying that there is the Father and the Son (1 Jn. 2:22, 23)?

Some suggest that the “doctrine of Christ” is only that Jesus is the Christ. Is the “apostles’ doctrine” only that the apostles were apostles (see Acts 2:42)? Of course not!

Al Maxey, a preacher who authors a website called *Reflections* promotes a super limited definition of the doctrine of Christ. He has been exposed for taking partial quotes from renowned scholars to make it look like 2 John 9 is limited to only the sphere “about” Christ, rather than pertaining to the whole counsel “of” Christ (which would include what the apostles commanded).

Mr. Maxey wrote:

“Dr. Albert Barnes states the problem very simply – ‘Is this the doctrine which Christ taught, or the true doctrine respecting Him? The language is somewhat ambiguous, like the phrase “the love of Christ,” which may mean either His love to us, or our love to Him. It is difficult to determine here which is the true sense – whether it means the doctrine or precepts which He taught, or the true doctrine respecting Him’ (*Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament*).”²

Maxey also quoted A.T. Robertson in the same article to promote a doubt-filled interpretation of 2 John 9:

“Dr. A.T. Robertson wrote, ‘The subjective genitive can be distinguished from the objective use only by the context. Sometimes the matter is not clear. In itself the genitive is neither subjective nor objective, but lends itself readily to either point of view ... some passages are open to doubt’ (A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, p. 499).”

However, neither of these scholars have doubts about 2 John 9. First, Albert Barnes didn’t leave his view unclear. He continued where Maxey left off:

“Macknight understands by it the doctrine taught **by Christ and his apostles**. It would seem **most probable** that this is the sense...The essential idea is, that the truth must be held respecting the **precepts**, the **character**, and the **work** of the Saviour. ” (emp. mine, SJW)³

A.T. Robertson stated without doubt:

“**Not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ** which is the standard of Christian teaching **as the walk of Christ** is the standard for the Christian’s walk (1Jo 2:6). See Joh 7:16; 18:19. These Gnostics claimed to be the progressives, the advanced thinkers... This struggle goes on always among those who approach the study of Christ. Is he a “landmark” merely or is he our goal and pattern? Progress we all desire, but progress toward Christ, not away from him” (emp. mine, SJW).⁴

Not only is it unethical to misrepresent a man’s research, but misrepresenting God by twisting His words carries an eternal weight of condemnation (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16).

In the next article, we will bring in some parallels to 2 John 9. But let’s appreciate the warning of this text which A.T. Robertson highlighted. If we seek to progress beyond the doctrine of Christ, we are actually digressing and forfeiting fellowship with God. Let us walk in the light as He is in the light.

¹ Unless noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Maxey, Al. “The Doctrine of Christ.” *Reflections*, <http://www.zianet.com/maxey/reflx84.htm>

³Barnes, Albert. *Barnes on the New Testament*, Vol. X, p. 365.

⁴ Robertson, Archibald T. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, p. 1977. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. https://www.ccel.org/ccel/r/robertson_at/word/cache/word.pdf