

2 John

Love and Truth

The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, ² because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

³ Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.

⁴ I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. ⁵ 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. ⁶ And 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. 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. ⁸ Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. ⁹ Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, ¹¹ for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

¹² Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

¹³ The children of your elect sister greet you.

Docetism

Docetism was an early Christian heresy that promoted a false view of Jesus' humanity. The word *Docetism* comes from the Greek *dokein*, which meant "to seem"; according to Docetism, Jesus Christ only *seemed* to have a human body like ours.

Docetism allowed that Jesus may have been in some way divine, but it denied His full humanity. Hardcore Docetists taught that Jesus was only a phantasm or an illusion, appearing to be human but having no body at all. Other forms of Docetism taught that Jesus had a "heavenly" body of some type but not a real, natural body of flesh. Docetism was closely related to Gnosticism, which viewed physical matter as inherently evil and spiritual substance as inherently good.

The problem with Docetism is that it denies the core truths of the gospel, namely, the death and resurrection of Christ. If Jesus did not have a real body, then He did not really die (Docetism teaches that His suffering on the cross was mere illusion). And, if Jesus had no physical body, He could not have risen bodily from the dead. Without the actual death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have no salvation, we are still in our sins, and our faith is futile (1 Corinthians 15:17). Docetism also denies the ascension of Christ (since He had no real body to make the ascent).

On the matter of Jesus' humanity, the Bible could not be clearer. Jesus went out of His way to prove His bodily resurrection to the disciples who thought at first they were seeing a ghost: "Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have" (Luke 24:39).

Membership Vow #5

*Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to study its **purity and peace**?*

Philippians 1:6-7

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the **defense and confirmation** of the gospel.

John 1:1; 14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
¹⁴ And the Word became **flesh** and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1 John 1:1-2

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and **have touched with our hands**, concerning the word of life— ²the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—

Galatians 6:1-2

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.