

THINK NOT THAT I CAME TO SEND PEACE ON THE EARTH

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Matthew 10:34 is a part of the instructions Jesus gave to His apostles before He sent them on the limited commission. There is a peace that is authorized by God and there is a peace that is not authorized by God. Under the limited commission if the Jews refused the message of the apostles, peace could not exist between them and God. Neither could it exist between those who obeyed God and those who did not obey Him.

Today, when sinful men are disposed to hear the message of peace (the Gospel), believe in Christ, repent of their sins, confess their faith in Jesus as the Son of God and then be baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins, God forgives them and they are reconciled to God in the church of Christ (John 3:16; Heb. 11:6; Mark 16:16; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 2:42, 47). This is the process whereby men make peace with God. But, when men refuse all or any part of the Gospel message (it is God's only saving power—Rom. 1:16), then no peace is possible between such men and God, or between such men and those who have obeyed the Gospel! Fellowship exists between men who have made peace with God, and who continue to maintain that peace with Him by faithful adherence to His will (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:7; 2 John 9-11).

When the sin of fornication reared its ugly head in the church at Corinth, peace ceased to exist between the fornicator and God. Such a situation demanded that those remaining at peace and in fellowship with God cease their fellowship with the brother who was guilty of fornication until such time that he repented of his fornication. Paul thus commanded the church at Corinth **“to have no company with fornicators”** (1 Cor. 5:9—ASV), and again he said:

I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat.... Put away the wicked man from among yourselves (1 Cor. 5:10-13—ASV).

This teaching of Paul is in perfect harmony with the apostle John's teaching in his second epistle.

Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works (2 John 9-11).

Some erroneously teach that “the teaching of Christ” means “the teaching about Christ.” If such were the case, then the only reason fellowship could be withdrawn from a child of God would be if he rejected any or all of the teaching about who the Lord was and what He did to redeem man. However, what Paul commanded the church at Corinth to do regarding the man who had **“his father's wife”** (1 Cor. 5:1), had not one thing to do with the life or deity of Christ! Now, Paul either sinned or someone has a perverted view of what the phrase, **“the teaching of Christ”** found in 2 John 9 means. Being that Paul, in the same letter to the same church, informed the Corinthians that, **“the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord”** (14:37) it seems only reasonable to allow the inspired apostle Paul's direction to the Corinthians to serve as a divine commentary on what the apostle John meant when the same Spirit that inspired Paul had John write 2 John 9-11. ~