

II John 1:9 Whosoever *transgresseth*, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

Strong's Concordance

1. to go by the side of
2. to go past or pass over without touching a thing
3. to overstep, neglect, violate, transgress
4. so to go past as to turn aside from
 - A. to depart, leave, be turned from
5. one who abandons his trust

Webster's 1828

To pass over or beyond any limit; to surpass

Alternate translations

Anyone who runs ahead

Anyone who wanders away

Whoever goes beyond

Anyone who goes too far

Everyone who withdraws

Imagine the apostle draws a circle, and that circle is labeled, "Doctrine of Christ," everyone who goes beyond the limit and doesn't abide in that circle, does not have God. But everyone who abides in the circle has the Father and the Son. This sounds like a pretty important circle; how do we know where the lines are? And which doctrines are inside the lines and which are outside? How exactly does one go beyond the lines?

- I. What is the doctrine of Christ?
 - A. That which Christ taught.

Doctrine means "teachings," so the teachings of Christ would mean the things Christ taught. This is summarized in Matt. 28:20 "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:" John heard this commission and was likely the last of the original eleven still carrying it out.
 - B. Those teachings concerning who Christ is.

This seems to me to be the most natural meaning within the context which it is written. He has just warned her to beware of deceivers and antichrists who do not have a confession concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. To abide in the doctrine of Christ is to remain steadfast on those inspired teachings which detail the person and work of Christ.

II. What is it to transgress the doctrine of Christ?

Therefore, transgressing the doctrine of Christ would be to say anything of Jesus Christ that is not in the bible, or to refuse something about Jesus Christ that is in the bible.

This is one reason I steer clear of movies, TV shows, books, songs, etc. which put words in Jesus' mouth, actions in his life, or emotions in his heart, which the scriptures do not testify of him. I know you have all heard or felt the emotional appeal to extra-biblical accounts of Jesus because of how someone supposed they helped them know Jesus better, but I tell you you are playing with fire, you are treading on thin ice. You had better be extremely careful in what you allow your mind to receive attributing to the person and work of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity. When your desire to know more of the doctrine of Christ causes you to go outside the revealed doctrine of Christ, you may find yourself with a Christ of your own imagination and therefore without the true Christ at all.

III. What is it to abide in the doctrine of Christ?

The opposite of transgressing the doctrine of Christ is not apathy. It is not hiding your talent in a napkin and doing nothing with it (Luke 19:20), rather it is living, working, breathing, and digging ever deeper into the true doctrine of Christ. If your claim is to want to know Jesus better than let me ask you how deeply you have searched the scriptures which Jesus said testified of him (John 5:39)?

- Read the Old Testament and note every time there is a type of Jesus (person, structure, nation, element, ritual). Then go back and study each type and note every way in which it is like Jesus and in which ways Jesus was the greater.
- Start back over and note every prophesy of Jesus in the whole Old Testament. Then go back and study each of those prophesies compared with their fulfilment in the New Testament.
- Start back over in Genesis and read through Malachi and note every Christophany or mention of the triune God. Then go back and study how that is illuminated by the person of Jesus.
- Read the four gospels and make a note of each scene which is harmonized in another gospel. Then go back and fill in the holes with the parallel accounts, study why each writer found that particular scene to be important for his readers.
- Read the four gospels again and make a note of each scene which is only mentioned in one gospel. Then go back and study why that scene was important to that writer's readers and how it fits with the whole inspired revelation of who Jesus was.
- Read the Acts of the Apostles and note which actions the reality of the risen Christ inspired and drove the disciples of Jesus to undertake. Study the appearance of Jesus to the Apostle Paul and what are the repercussions of the ascended savior personally interfering in the earthly life of one of his chief enemies.
- Study the epistles and note every time Jesus is mentioned by name or implication. Then go back and study each of those passages and how they shape the life of the believer and the growth of the church.
- Study the Revelation of John and note every time Jesus is mentioned, in name or type. Then go back and study in which ways Satan and the world seem to have the

upper hand over him in space and time and what are the signs of his inevitable victory every time.

Now tell me again how you loved that song, book, movie, or show about Jesus because of your insatiable desire to know more about him? Is that what it was, or was it your insatiable desire to be entertained or emotionally moved and you bought the devil's lie that stoked your pride while he taught you a false Christ?

To abide in the doctrine of Christ means to make it where you live, not your speculative playground. Make it your life to know him and the more you know him make him your life. (Php. 1:21)

IV. What is it to not have God?

The problem with going beyond the inspired teachings on who Christ is, is that you end up with a false Jesus, and if you have a false Jesus, you have a false God. "Rom. 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." When God gives us the full picture of everything we need to know about Jesus and his redemptive work, and long before plumbing the depths of what he has given us we turn to speculative narratives, how are we not fulfilling this description of the depraved nature of man? We pride ourselves on being able to masterfully strain the facts from fiction and I hope you're as good at that as you think you are, because the risk you are running is ending up with a false god and therefore, by default, being without the true God.

V. What is it to have the Father and the Son?

In contrast to this, when we determine to live within the lines of the true doctrine of Christ, we know the real Jesus and therefore know the real God. Not because Jesus is in himself the Trinity (that's a false Jesus), but because when we know the real Jesus as revealed in the scriptures, we know of his relationship with the Father and the Spirit. If you do the kind of bible study I described above, in searching for Jesus, you will find the Trinity. If you lose the biblical Jesus, you lose God. If you abide in the biblical Jesus you will, by necessity, abide in God.