

2 John
“Love in the truth ”

I. Chp. 1:1-3 Introduction:

II. Chp. 1:4 Statement of purpose: “Walking in the truth”:

III. Chp. 1:5-1:11 Main body of teaching: “Two Proofs of our walk-in truth”

1. 1:5-6 Practice the truth: The test for Christian behavior is “*Loving one another*”!
2. 1:7-11 Protect the truth: The test for Christian belief is the “*Person of Christ*”
 - a. 1:7-9 Positive: Abide in the truth
 - b. 1:10-11 Negative: Avoid the lies

IV. Chp. 1:12-13 Closing “That our joy may be full”

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- IV. **Chp. 1:12-13 Closing “That our joy may be full”**

I. **Chp. 1:1-3 Introduction**

We begin a new study this morning and it will be a brief on as we in are in the shortest book in the Bible the little letter of 2 John. We ought not think that just because of the shortness of the letter that it doesn't contain as much truth as does larger sections of the Bible. The similarities between the three letters of the Apostle John are many but there are major differences as well. They can be attributed to whom John was writing: In 1st John he was writing a general letter to Christians everywhere. Whereas in the next two letters they are personal and directed at individuals. Another difference is the construction of the letters as 1st John doesn't follow the normal ancient letter writing pattern chosen instead to being what I describe as lyrical as John choose to write in repeated words and phrases. Here the Bible Student will note that John employs the normal writing method of:

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 - 5. 1:5-6 ***Practice*** the truth: The test for Christian behavior is “*Loving one another*”!
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In the introduction we have both, who the letter is from as well as to whom it was sent too. The letter is from “The Elder” and in John's first letter John addressed himself in terms of apostle as

well as elder. The word “elder” was a common word used to describe the leadership in the early church and was also used to describe someone who was mature in their faith as well as a person who was more advanced in their years. In John’s case her was both mature in his faith as well as advanced in his years. The fact that John address his correspondence this way suggests that the letter was personal as does how John address then letter too; “*the elect lady and her children.*”

There are two possibilities as to the meaning of that phrase:

- First, that it is John’s way of addressing a specific church and the congregation.
- Second, that this is a specific lady and her family whom John had a spiritual relationship with.

Not that it matters much but I lean towards the second for specific clues in the letter. The major clue for me is found in verse 3 and the threefold blessing of “Grace, mercy, and peace” as your will only find those three in letters where they are addressed to individuals such as 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus! The Greek word for Lady is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Martha but there is no need to suggest that this was her name. Based upon the evidence of the letter she appears to a woman of prominence in the Church and a person who was esteemed in the Church as it appears that the church meet at her home, verse 10. It is equally interesting that this letter is the only letter on the New Testament addressed to a woman and her children as they are also included in John’s salutation. John calls her one of “God’s elect” whom he has God’s love and affection for. As we noted in John’s first letter the love that he is writing of is a kind of love that is “in spite of the individual” and not “because of the individual”. What this tells us is that John didn’t just have a mere human fondness for this woman but had God’s divine love for her that was conditional. That isn’t to suggest that she wasn’t displaying Christ’s characteristics as John says that he loved her “in truth” which suggests that she was living her faith. She and her children, as John will write in verse 4, were examples of living out one’s life in the Word of God and in truth. Notice the words of verse 2, “because of the truth which abides in us and will be

with us forever”. There is today withing ecumenicalism a false concept that teaches that we are love one another never mind the differences of opinion on Biblical truth. That the primary aspect that the Christian must maintain above all others is “loving one another”. It is to this very topic that John’s letter to this “elect lady” was written. The Apostles point is **“You cannot truly love in truth unless you possess truth, and you can only demonstrate that you possess truth by the way you love others!”** John seeks to encourage the balance between truth and love as:

Love without truth is *Sentimentality*

Truth without love is *Brutality*

The balance between truth and love can only be achievable for the believer when they are enjoying the threefold blessing of *“grace, mercy, and peace”* which can only be found in the truth which is only in *“God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ”* who **IS** the *“Son of the Father in truth and love”*.

II. Chp. 1:4 Statement of purpose: “Walking in the truth”

It seems that what John is addressing here in the “statement of purpose” is the same in which he addressed in his first letter and that was the heresy by the Gnostics of separating Jesus from the Godhead and making him a created being. It also seems to suggest that these false teachers that were engaged in this lie had a particular success upon young people as John now takes this up to say that the “Elect Lady” should be encouraged as John had spent some time with her children and discovered that they were “waling in the truth”. That is to say that they were ordering their lives around the truths concerning Jesus Christ. Here was a Christian home in the midst of a pagan world system and false teachers that were infiltrating the church with lies and yet they had not succumb to the lies that were everywhere. Here were young Christians that were following the truths and overcoming those that suggested that “to maintain unity” they need to surrender the truth of the person and work of Christ. The abruptness of this letter suggests further that these

false teachers were popular among the youth and had come from the church a split and were now attacking the church suggesting that the OLD TRUTH was obsolete. To this John will address that: “**THE Truth of the Person and works of Christ are never necessary to be surrendered for the believer to enjoy time at the altar of love**”! ***Christian unity and “love” are never possible and are never demanded by God if it can only be obtained, enjoyed, or maintained at the expense of truth!***

III. Chp. 1:5-1:11 Main body of teaching: “Two Proofs of our walk-in truth”

This section divides into two proofs that the “elect lady” and her children can maintain “walking in the truth”.

1. **Vs. 5-6** The first is the personal; ***Practice the truth: The test for Christian behavior is “Loving one another”***! Thirteen times in in the New Testament we are exhorted to “love one another” and ten of those are found in the writings of the Apostle John. The sheer volume of this exhortation tells us that with regards to this command Christians and the church are far to infrequently following it and it also tells us that we are slow learners in this regard as well. The love in which John mentions here is a “In spite of Love” which again tells us that we are not expected to agree with each other on all points, but we better be treating our brothers and sisters like Jesus not on the basis of their agreement on all points of truth. We are to have others interest inside of us as this conveys the Greek in this passage. But as mentioned that this must never supersede the truth concerning the incarnation and deity of Jesus as He alone is the sole basis of our unity and love!
2. **7-11** The second test is that the believer is to; ***Protect the truth: The test for Christian belief is the “Person of Christ”***. To accomplish John reminds the “Elect lady and her children” that they will need remind themselves that there are “***many deceivers***” who “***have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.***” This person John goes on to say is a deliberate “deceiver and an antichrist”. Because John loved this woman and her children he didn’t want them to fall prey to these false teachers. They were roving fakes that traveled around to house churches and posed a real threat to the believers who though loving to invite them in with hospitality to spread their lies. The pattern of these false teachers is the same as those today which is to attack the Person and work of our Lord Jesus. To accomplish this John gives two ways in which they can “protect the truth”:
 - A. **1:7-9 Positive: Abide in the truth:** Here John’s emphasis is upon the individual Christian maintain abiding in the truth. They can accomplish this by, “Look to yourself” lest they “lose those things they have worked for”. They needed to indulge in self-examination (verse 8) to gage their maturity in the truth. Were they still growing (receiving a full reward) for

their study in the Word of God? Maturity is measured best not in what we know but how we behave in what we know! So that the believer would know what the loss is John says that it will be seen in a loss of morality as he says, “*whoever transgress does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God*”. That’s in the negative but in the positive, “*He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*”

Simply put lies have no transformative power and will be obvious that they don’t affect our behavior they just puff out our flesh.

- B. 1:10-11 Negative: Avoid the lies:** The second course of action is to avoid those who teach lies. As most churches at this time met in homes the teachers relied upon the hospitality of the family in whose house the church meet, and John now tells the “elect lady” not to show hospitality to false teachers who does not “*abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son*”. For to grant them hospitality to be involved in spreading the lies that they teach concerning Jesus.

IV. Chp. 1:12-13 Closing “*That our joy may be full*”

Vs. 12-13 Here in the closing is another reason I believe that this letter was written to a person and not to a church as John had wished to communicate more to the “Elect lady” and her children but wanted to do so face to face. His sudden writing seemed to be as a direct result of the sister who was never John at the time of the letter and was informing John of the situation at hand and perhaps some of her children were with their aunt? It is here that we finish this wonderful brief letter encouraging the believer to maintain the balance between truth and love!