

2 John Notes

Introduction And Greeting (vss. 1-3)

- “Elder” can mean an old man, a senior person deserving respect, or an overseer of the church. It probably does not mean that John was an overseer, since there were many elders in the church at that time and the term would not particularly designate the writer. Therefore, it would have reference to age and it would refer to the well-known and aged apostle of the Lord.
- “Elect lady” is *eklektos Kuria* which would be a symbolical reference to the church. John does not simply call the church *kyria* (feminine) as the bride of the *kyrios* (Lord); he does so in respectful address, perhaps because this is not a church that he himself has founded.
- Love and truth are not passing sentiments, nor are they dependent on depths of emotional feeling. Love and truth originate in God. Like Him, they endure without changing, and their splendor never fades.
- At the time John’s letters were written, the salutation of a letter ended with a greeting. Most of the New Testament letters follow this custom. Rather than wishing or praying that God may grant us peace, he turns it into a promise that God’s mercy and grace will be ours if we truly remain in His truth and love.

Commendation For Walking In Truth (vs. 4)

- It is most likely that John had heard news that some of the church had left the faith after being influenced by the false teachers. But John rejoices that some of the children remained true to the faith that had been delivered to them.
- Truth is not something we simply believe; it is a motivating force in our lives. It is not enough to know the truth; we must show it through our actions throughout our lives. Obedience to God’s truth is not optional.
- John is not requiring something new but that which has been the supreme and final word “from the beginning.” Children love their parents by obeying them (John 14:15). How sad it is when Christians claim to love the Bible but hate their brethren. Where there is a sincere love for the Bible, there will be a love for God’s people.

Commandment To Love One Another (vss. 5-6)

- Love for one another is what the Father required (1 John 4:7), the Son manifested (1 John 3:16), and the Spirit makes available through life in Him (1 John 4:13-15).
- Four times in vss. 4-6 the author uses the noun “commandment.” This is John’s way of making clear that what he is saying is a direct expression

of God's will. The test of love is obedience to God's commands, and the test of obedience is whether one walks in love. The argument is intentionally circular.

Cautions Concerning False Teachers (vss. 7-11)

- Vs. 7 is reminiscent of 1 John 2:18, 27; 4:1-3. The "deceivers" left the fellowship of faithful Christians for the world. John's intention in using the present tense is to say something beyond what he has said in 1 John 4:2. What the present tense emphasizes is the timeless character of the event (John 3:31; 6:14; 11:27). It is not simply an event in history but an "abiding truth," defining the union between humanity and deity that is present in Jesus' person.
- John accepted full responsibility for these Christians and wrote to them. All of John's labors were directed to the maintenance of the truth that Jesus has come in the flesh.
- "Transgresseth" means "to go beyond." Other versions say "runs ahead." These false teachers were not content to stay within the limits of the word of God. They would refer to themselves today as "progressive" or "modern," preferring to go beyond the Bible and "improve on" what God has written. But this is the wrong kind of progress. Truth and love go together. Christians cannot have fellowship where there is false doctrine.
- The "teaching of Christ" can be construed as teaching about Christ or as the teaching that Christ Himself did. Many wish to restrict this passage to the teaching about Christ so that it will not preclude fellowship with those who introduce unauthorized practices of which Jesus never spoke. A distinction is made between "gospel and doctrine," "grace and law," and "the cross and the church" in such a way as to restrict salvation to belief in this limited "gospel" while denying that any "doctrine" can condemn.
- Any aid that we give to false teachers is a share in their evil deeds. They must not be shown hospitality, as if they were brethren in the faith. They are deceivers, and thus it would be a mockery of the Father and a sin against Christ to give them a place of respect within the church. This statement is all the more remarkable since it comes from the "apostle of love" and that hospitality is such an oft-repeated command.
- The easiest way to get detoured from faithfulness and to lose all spiritual ground you have gained is to get involved with false doctrine. Satan is a destroyer, and he uses lies to rob saints of their blessings (John 8:44).

Conclusion (vss. 12-13)

- The letter closes with a normal wish. John acknowledges that there is much more he might say, but he recognizes that it will be more effective if he were to say it in person.
- When Christians enjoy fellowship in Christ, one of the results of their fellowship is the "joy" of the Lord.
- The "children" who sent "their greetings" were doubtless members of another congregation who understood the plight of their sister church. They wished to share John's concern to strengthen the bonds of love that unite all saints.