

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND JOHN

- John's second and third brief letters, while altogether different from the first Epistle are nevertheless of great importance.
- They bring before us guiding principles that have often been overlooked, but are needful if the people of God are to walk in a way pleasing to God.
- In 2 John a Christian lady is warned regarding false teachers. Through John's warning we learn what our individual attitude toward all anti-Christian propagandists should be.
- In 3 John the message is the very opposite. We learn through the apostle's instruction to Gaius what our behavior should be towards those who are lovers of Christ and who go forth proclaiming His truth.
- These Epistles are charming in their simplicity, and give us a wonderful insight into the heart of a man who speaks of himself as an elder rather than as an apostle, even though we know he was that.
- **John deals primarily, as we have seen, with truth concerning the family of God.**
- **Peter's letters deal chiefly with the government of God.**
- **Paul's Epistles are concerned mainly with the church of God.**
- But in these last letters, written many years after both Peter and Paul had sealed their testimony with their blood, we get instruction regarding church fellowship that we cannot afford to ignore if our fellowship is to be real.

- **This epistle, like Paul's letter to Philemon, is a private personal letter from the aged Apostle John, addressed to an unidentified Christian woman, and her pious family to warn them against entertaining false teachers.**
- **It is a charming example of the private correspondence of the apostles and the early church .**
- **This epistle, in which Jesus is portrayed as THE TRUTH, is notable in that it is the only one in the New Testament written exclusively to a woman, specifically to warn this lady and her family of some false teachers (verse 10).**
- **As we can gather from the letter itself, it was written to a mother with several children, perhaps a widow.**
- **Like 1& 3 John, this book contains fatherly instruction to Christian People.**

- **AUTHOR**

- The authorship of II John has traditionally been ascribed to the Apostle John, the author of I John, III John ("the elder"), Revelation, and the gospel of John.
- None will doubt that the Apostle John is the author after reading the two Epistles and comparing them with the First and with the Gospel.
- The earliest church fathers exhibited no doubt about the author, but perhaps because of the brevity of the letters, they did not quote it very often. However, there is every evidence that John wrote it, as it resembles his first epistle very closely .
- Eight out of its thirteen verses may be found in First John either in sense or expression.
- The language, vocabulary, doctrine and style of writing of the two epistles definitely point to the author of the fourth gospel, and especially to the writer of the First Epistle of John.
- In addition the use of the word "truth" and the expression "the truth" – 5 times in 2 John, and 10 times in the First Epistle, as well as the specific reference to the commandment "love one another, in 2 John 5-6, with I John 2:5; 3:11, 23; 5:3 links 2 John directly to 1 John. So once John is accepted as the author of 1 John, he must also be the author of 2 John.

- **RECIPIENTS OF THE LETTER**

- The destination and recipient of 2 John letter has been much disputed, and poses a few problems.
- The opening words are variously interpreted -- "**The ancient to the lady Elect, and her children**".
- Who is the lady elect? Exact interpretation is made difficult because the expression "elect lady" can be translated also "elect Kyria" or "lady Elekta." so is she the elect Kyria? The lady Elekta? A lady named Elekta or Kyria? A lady elect, whose name is omitted? A Church? All these interpretations are defended.
- Were the recipients a lady and her children or is "lady" used as a figure of speech for something else, perhaps a church?
- Later references include: "your children" (v. 4), "lady" (v. 5), and "the children of your elect sister" (v. 13).

- Many consider, that the letter is addressed to a particular church, and "the children" are members of the church, which John urges on to faith in Jesus Christ, to the avoidance of heretics, to love, and opine that this interpretation best fits in with the ending to the letter, which says "The children of thy sister Elect salute thee."(v. 13)
- This seems to be true for several reasons:
- (1) a sister is mentioned, as well as her children (v. 13);
- (2) John not only says that he wants to speak with "you" (plural) "face to face" (v. 13), but also that the children of "your elect sister greet you" (singular); and
- (3) "lady" (Kyria) is the feminine form of "Lord" (Kyrios). As the "Bride of Christ," the church is the "Lady" of the "Lord." Probably, therefore, this is another reference to the church as "Bride of Christ" (see also II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; and Rev. 21:2).
- Some scholars believe that the word Kyria is used to personify one of the early churches- a specific church of unknown location (or perhaps churches), designated as "the elect lady and her children."

- Others believe that the word Kyria is used to refer to a lady believer- a "chosen or elect lady and her children"-who was probably from the province of Asia (2 John 1).
- The reason for this view is that the word lady in the Greek is kyria [kuria]. This word may be translated as a proper name, since Kyria was a common name among the Greeks, and is not an unknown name even in our times [e.g. Lady Bird Johnson]
- Some believe that Kyria refers to a notable and influential Christian matron and her family in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, to whom John ministered in his old age and whose hospitality was known since she entertained the travelling missionaries. Apparently the home of this lady was the meeting place for a group of believers.
- My view is that Second John was written to a Christian woman of influence and standing, esteemed by all, and her children,[vs.1-2.] one who was in the habit of opening her home to itinerant preachers,[vs.10] and one who does not constitute an allegory. However there is a clear application to the saints, the true church and her people, warning them to test experience by truth.

- **There were 3 different kinds of ministries in the early church (prior to the completion of the N.T.)**
- **1. Apostles** – John at this time, being the only one left.
- **2. Prophets** – Wandering preachers not attached to a congregation. (they had the right of entry into all the churches)
- **3. Elders** – Were raised up in the local body. They were attached to a specific congregation & didn't wander.
- But there were also false teachers, who were traveling (verses 7 to 11) among the churches, and John warns this lady against even entertaining them (verses 10 to 11), much less their false doctrines.
- He wanted her to know that not all “Roving Reverends” were worthy of such warm hospitality.
- Even secular writers wrote about their abuses: a) Lucian, the Greek writer, in his work called the Peregrinus, draws the picture of a man who had found the easiest possible way of making a living w/o working. He was an itinerant charlatan who lived on the fat of the land by traveling round the various communities of the Christians, & settling down wherever he like, & living luxuriously at their expense.

- **THEME: "For truth's sake"**-The themes Christian love and truth dominate 2 John
- **DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING:**
 - It is believed that 1, 2, and 3 John were all written in Ephesus, and during the same period of time, about 85-95 A.D. The reason for believing that they were written at Ephesus is that this was John's place of residence in the last years of his life.
- **OCCASION FOR WRITING**
 - The occasion of writing both second and third John was in part the problem of travel for Christian preachers in the Roman world of John's day . Since inns were notoriously dirty and often houses of ill fame, private hospitality was vital .
 - These letters were therefore written as letters of warning and guidance so that the benevolent private hospitality of the saints would not be abused or exploited by false teachers .
- **These false teachers were to be identified by the fact that they denied the incarnation of the Lord and did not believe that he came in the flesh or that he will return at his second advent in the flesh.**
- **It's possible this lady/church's hospitality may have been hindering the cause of the gospel.**
- **Lacking discernment, she had allowed her love to "spill over" the boundaries of truth.**
- **Not knowing quite what to do, it appears that she had written to the Apostle John to ask his opinion about certain problems that had come up.**
- **This letter is his response to her question.**
- **Back in those days, of course, the New Testament was not available as it is to us. The leaders of the churches were dependent upon certain men, called prophets, who went from place to place, preaching the truth. Evidently some of these men had come to the home of this woman, probably in the city of Ephesus, and they had raised certain doctrinal matters which disturbed her.**
- **As we go through this, we will see how it also answers many of the questions we have today -- especially the question of how to treat people who teach wrong things.**

- **PURPOSES**
- John wrote this second letter for the following reasons:
- To commend the lady and her children for their love and loyalty to the truth.
- To encourage her to continue to walk in love and obedience.
- To warn her of false teachers and dissuade her against showing hospitality to them.
- To inform her of his plans to visit her.
- To send greetings from the children of her sister.
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- **THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AUTHOR WHEN HE WROTE** are not explicitly stated.
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- **CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE RECEIPIENTS** are as above --- in danger of being hoodwinked by false teachers and receiving them in their homes.

• GLIMPSES OF THE LIFE & CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR.

• The following are particularly worthy of note:-

• **HIS INSISTENCE** concerning 1) THE DEITY OF CHRIST [3]
• 2) THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST [7]

• **HIS INSIGHT** into the spiritual condition of the sister's household

• **HIS INTELLIGENCE** & regard for the sister to whom he wrote.

• He deliberately concealed her identity to preserve her family from any unpleasant reaction should its contents become known to those to whom she is particularly warned. He did not want her to be ignorant as to how to identify false teachers, and thereby extend her generosity to those who were not only a menace to the Christian faith, but who were like most of the heretics of that age, conspicuous for their impure and profligate lives. Her concern was to safeguard her and her children against such.

• **HIS INTEREST** in the Lord's people,

• their progress [1&4] and

• their presence [12]

• **HIS INSTRUCTIONS**

• with regard to love [5]

• with regard to the presence & presentations of false teachers [7,& 10-13]

• with regard to warning against losing rewards [8]

- **KEY VERSE:** Verse 10 "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him" (2 John 10).
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- **MEMORY VERSE:** Verse 8
- **KEY WORDS**
- **The word ' TRUTH' is used 5 times [vs. 1, 2, 3, 4] in this short Epistle of but thirteen verses, and forms its key-word.**
- **' LOVE' is used 4 times [1,3,5,6] .**
- These words are the keynotes of this single chapter book and ought to be the keynote of our living.
- By the TRUTH we mean not only the body of revealed truth the Scriptures –**THE WRITTEN WORD**, but also the LORD, who as the chief subject of the Scriptures is Himself the TRUTH – **THE LIVING INCARNATE WORD**.
- True Christian love rests or depends upon the truth. That truth is Jesus Christ and the Word of God. Evidences of Christian love based upon the truth will be seen in the life of a believer.
- Then there is the contrast to the truth--false teachers. They do not have real love in their hearts and lives and they reject Jesus Christ and the Word. John tells the church that it should reject such persons, ". . . do not take him into your house or welcome him" (2 John 10).
- What should be done when a false teacher comes to the church and wants to speak? He should not be allowed to speak. Before allowing anyone to speak in a church the pastor and leaders should make sure that that person's beliefs and doctrines are correct. John would have us see that doctrinal truth is followed by duty walking in that truth.

- **SOME THOUGHTS ON LOVE**

- **I. The Source of Love.** Truth. Most versions print truth with a capital "T," Truth. Certainly this is one of the Lord's Names, and He is the source of all true love.
- **II. The Reality of Love.** That is, the nature of love commended here is true love, love that is no mere pretense or make-believe.
- **III. The Breadth of Love.** Love cannot be confined to one. The Elder (John must have been about 90 years old when he wrote this Epistle) not only loved "**The elect lady," but also "her children," and this pious family was not only loved by the aged apostle, but also by "all they that have known the truth."**
- **IV. The Realization of Love.** RV. gives "understand" for "known" in verse 1. This is to say, **those who have realized truth and the love of God in Christ to themselves love others.**
- **V. The Inwardness of Love.** "**Which dwells in us," God's love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.** Is it truth or love that is meant here? Well, He is both Truth and Love, and as both dwells within us and with us.

- There are 2 equally extreme misconceptions that many people have concerning what it means to be a Christian or to live the Christian life.
- 1. One view says, “It doesn’t matter what you believe, as long as you are sincere and loving.”
- 2. The other one says, “It doesn’t matter how you live as long as you believe the truth.”
- a) The reason why both views are just as wrong is because the Word of God binds both truth and love inseparably together. [They are friends, not enemies]
- b) Nowhere will you see this perspective more clearly, than in 2nd John.

• **CENTRAL TRUTHS & LEADING IDEAS**

- **While the one great truth that John seeks to set forth in this brief message is the commandment that we who are in Christ should love one another, he also warns of the heresies of which he had written in his first epistle.**
- **He teaches too, that true love is based on truth and is exercised in the interest of truth [sincere]. Hence true love will shut the door against those who do not hold the apostolic teaching with respect to Christ. Love should minister to those in affliction or sickness, but it must not help those who are propagating error. This urgent message centers around the truth in its relation to Christian living. Second John therefore touches on the personal walk of a Christian in a day of apostasy.**
- **Second John is relevant today because the truth is worth contending for and to "walk in the truth" in 2 John is to reject heresy and follow the doctrine of Christ .**
- **True teachers are to be received with joy; but it is wrong for the Christian to receive false teachers.**
- **These thirteen verses are directed against the same Docetic errors and germs of Docetic Gnosticism which St. John strives to uproot in his Gospel and First Epistle, and whose proponents lured Christians from "following the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father."**
- **The person addressed is commended for her piety, and is warned against false teachers. Christians are advised that they should love one another and watch out for false teachers (such as those who don't believe that Jesus Christ was a human being with a real body). The Church's Rejection of Apostate Teachers is thus very apparent**

- **TEACHINGS ABOUT CHRIST**
- 1) Jesus is the Son of the Father [3]
- 2) Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh [7]
- 3) The truth [Jesus] dwelleth in us and shall be with us for ever [6]

- **THE TEST OF TRUTH.**
- The aged Apostle gives an infallible test of truth in vv7 & 11.
- 1. The reality of the humanity of our Lord in His earthly life was that "That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."
- 2. The reality of the humanity of our Lord in His second advent is that He "Comes in the flesh" (R.V.).
- If one applies this test to some popular religious movements of our day, the result is startling e.g. Christian Science, Spiritism, Russellism, and other similar movements are unmasked, and shown to be against Christ, and utterly wrong and of the Devil.

- **Note contrasts: some(4) vs. many(7).**
- **Note contrasts: children of the church (1) vs. deceivers of the church(7). N.**
- **Second John is in the Greek a line longer than Third John making it the second shortest Book in the New Testament.**

- **DUTIES TO PERFORM**

- LOVE IN THE TRUTH [1]
- LOVE ONE ANOTHER [6]
- WALK IN THE TRUTH [4]
- WALK AFTER CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS [6]
- BE CAREFUL NOT TO LOSE BUT TO RECEIVE A FULL REWARD[8]
- **!**

- **ERRORS TO AVOID**

- BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS v 10-11 i.e **RESEARCH, ROVING REVERENDS**
- **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work.**
- **We are not to receive these people in such a way as to imply that we are authenticating or accepting their teaching.**
- **You see, in those days motels did not exist. and inns were very few and far between. When these teachers traveled. they stayed in private homes. So when they went into a home with false teaching, and the person continued to open his home to them, he would be endorsing their doctrine.**

- **PRAYERS TO ECHO**

- a) THANKSGIVING that the truth dwelleth in us and shall be with us for ever
- b) SUPPLICATION FOR STRENGTH TO PERFORM THE DUTIES LISTED ABOVE

- What to do
- **(7-11) I. Note the good guidelines we have when someone comes knocking on your door selling their “stuff”!**
- 1. Recognize 1st that false teaching concerns the doctrine of Christ.
 - a) 1st, share in love not rudeness; 2nd, be assertive & direct (no compromise of doctrinal position should be made); 3rd no assistance or encouragement should be given in the spread of such false teachings.
- (1) Love points people to Christ, not away from Him! 2 J.
- (7) Who to beware of - Reminds us of the test 1 Jn.4:2. K. Without Incarnation there could be no fellowship with God, &, of course, no salvation! 1. A Savior not quite God is a bridge broken at the further end. (Bishop Moule) L. Note contrasts: some(4) vs. many(7). M. Note contrasts: children of the church(1) vs. deceivers of the church(7). N.

- Know what people believe & teach, before you support them!
- 1. It's a "support issue" not a hospitality or politeness issue.
- 2. Some have used this verse to justify the most "unloving behavior".
- 3 1 Barclay; 2 John; pg. 157 3. Telling someone the truth may be difficult, but, in the long run, it is the most loving thing to do.
- 4. Society today is riding the high horse of...Tolerance!
- 5. Tolerance = "If we really love people, we'll accept them regardless of their beliefs." a) Yet, what kind of love lets someone believe a lie that eventually destroys them?
- (1) That's not love, that's indifference...the opposite of love!
- b) To really love someone is to tell them the truth!
- c) John Stott explains this well (Pg.104 Swindoll) "Our love is not so blind as to ignore the views & conduct of others. Truth should make our love discriminating...On the other hand, we must never champion the truth in a harsh or bitter spirit...So the Christian fellowship should be marked equally by love & truth, & we are to avoid the dangerous tendency to extremism, pursuing either at the expense of the other. Our love grows soft if it is not strengthened by truth, & our truth grows hard if it is not softened by love. We need to live according to Scripture which commands us both to love each other in the truth & to hold the truth in love."

- **OUTLINE: two simple ones are given**
- Greeting and Commendation for Love and Truth (2 John 1-4).
- Commandment to Love One Another (2 John 5, 6).
- Warnings Against False Teachers (2 John 7-11).
- Closing (2 John 12, 13).

- I. Love Expressed in the Boundary of Truth, Verses 1-6 - "Love in truth"
- II. Life is an Expression of the Doctrine of Christ, Verses 7-11- "False doctrine leads to evil deeds.)
- III. Personal Greeting, Verses 12,13

- The first six verses present the problem to us and give us John's approach in answering it:
- **The elder [as John terms himself] to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not only I but also all who know the truth, because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us for ever: Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children following the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father. And now I beg you, 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. And this is love, the we follow his commandment; this is the commandment, as you have heard from the beginning, that you follow love. (2 John 1:1-6 RSV)**
- **Here John is setting the stage for the answer to this lady's problem.**
- **He is gathering together two things that must be taken into consideration in facing a problem of this kind.**
- **Two outstanding words are used all through the text. They are Truth and love.**
- **Notice how he links these two in verse three:**
- **Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love. This ought to be the characteristic of Christians.**
- In Paul's letter to the Ephesians he says the same thing -- that a Christian should learn to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15 RSV). The remarkable work of a Christian life is to gather these often opposing things together and keep them in balance.
- Now that is our problem as well. Many of us emphasize one, at the expense of the other. We may emphasize truth and center upon doctrinal matters, insisting that the Scriptures be followed carefully, but at the expense of love. When we do this, we are rigid and cold and judgmental -- sometimes even cruel in the way we say things. Even though what we say is exactly right, we are trying to defend the truth of God at the expense of love.

- Let us pray that we may so speak and deal with others that we will manifest the graciousness, the gentleness of Christ.
- Paul says that if a brother is overtaken in a fault, or if someone has strayed from the truth. the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle and understanding. This is no encouragement, then, to rigidity and narrowness and bigotry, saying hateful and reviling things.
- Let us not be that way -- rigid, judgmental, scorching. We need to display love.
- But our love must not be so wide, so tolerant, that it excludes the great fact that Jesus Christ is the only way to God. No other one has come. No other savior has been sent. He alone is the answer to humanity's hopelessness.