

2 John 01 - Walking in Truth; Reject False Teachers; Hospitality

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1 The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

1 The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

1 From: The Elder

To: The chosen lady and her children, whom I genuinely love, and not only I but also all who know the truth,

1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

Who is the "Elect Lady"?

kuri = Feminine proper name? *evk/lekth* is strange, never assigned to any other individual in the NT as a single predicate (except in Rom 16:13, "chosen in the Lord").

(1) The view of *kuri* that is taken as **a symbolic description of the Christian Church** has occurred consistently since as early as Jerome [Jerome (Ep. Xi. Ad Ageruchiam); later Calovius, Whiston, Michaelis, Augusti, Hofmann (Weissagung u. Erfüllung, II. P.321, and Schriftbew., I. P.226ff); Hilgenfeld (1855), Ewald, Candlish, Barnes, Huther, etc. Also, more recently, Harris, Marshall, Plummer, Stedman, Vines, McGee, Wiersbe, Walvoord, and other modern commentators.]

The view of believers as "children of the Church" may have been comfortable for Jerome, et al., for ecclesiastical reasons, but it flies in the face of Scriptural usage. We are "children of God," not "children of the Church." The Church is presented as a virgin (2 Cor 11:2) and the bride (John 3:29; Rev 18:23; 21:2,9; 22:17; Cf. Eph 5:22-27).

It is also significant that this word does not appear elsewhere in this signification. The further allusion to the sister (v13) would seem fatal to this view, but for the preponderance of expositional history.

(2) An individual, probably a prominent lady in the Church.

This seems clear from a straight-forward reading. The writer knows her sister and her sister's children (v13). This view would make this the only book in the Bible specifically addressed to a woman.

It is true that John uses a plural (v6,8,10,12) and an individual (v1,4,5,13). The fact that he embraces others as well in passing doesn't alter the intended addressee.

The family of the "Elect Lady" is clearly in view.

(3) Who would be the most "Elect Lady" in the entire Bible?

The most likely *prima facie* suggestion is that the recipient of this intimate letter is the most "elect" of all women, the very one that Jesus Himself entrusted to John's personal care: Mary, the mother of Jesus - John 19:26-27; She did have a sister (v13; John 19:25)

This view, however, is not even discussed among modern commentators. [Except Knauer: *Stud. U. Krit.*, 1833, Part 2, p.452ff; q.v. Huther, J. E., *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude* (translated from the German) (11 vols.), Funk and Wagnalls, 1884.]

Most Biblical believers, from their revulsion to the tragic and heretical deification of Mary by the Roman Catholic Church, tend to dismiss her and ignore her situation and predicament. [We cannot miss the dismissive allusion at her prompting during the wedding at Cana (John 2:4)]

We know so little of her subsequent history from the Scriptures: there are minimal allusions in the Book of Acts (1:14). She apparently remained in the care of John in his retirement in Ephesus. (This conjecture would indicate that 2 John would have been written earlier than 90 AD, since Mary would have been about a century old by then.)

Most of what is commonly published by the Roman Catholic Church has been contrived by subsequent Popes to promote their doctrinal heresies, etc.

The "Elect Lady" is loved "by all they that have known the Truth." Who else could this fit? This, too, seems to point to far more than simply a prominent personage

within the local church! If this suspicion is correct, it places an entirely unique complexion on the letter, and also provides a number of significant insights.

(ii) Truth (2)

- 2 because of the truth which remains in us and will be with us forever:
- 2 for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:
- 2 that is present in us and will be with us forever.
- 2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

If you take love away from truth, you don't have Christian love. Real love always operates within the sphere of truth.

(C) Trinitarian benediction (3)

- (a) Threefold benediction (3a)
- (b) Members of the Trinity enumerated (3b)
- (c) Basis of benediction: truth and love (3c)

3 Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the **Son of the Father**, in truth and love.

3 Grace, mercy *and* peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus the Messiah, the Father's Son, in truth and love.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

— "...Son of the Father" — it is suggestive that in v3 John emphasizes that Jesus' paternity — "Son of the Father" — to the recipient. This is another of those passages that links—and equates—the Father with the Son.

— The paternal emphasis in v3 would have had very specific implications for Mary. Can you imagine the burden Mary had to endure throughout her entire adult life from the cloud of the ostensible illegitimacy that was imputed to her first pregnancy? (Cf. The aspersions cast in John 8:41). Jesus then discusses their parentage in 8:44! (Cf. The childhood insights of Ps 69:7-12)

Grace is getting what we don't deserve; Mercy is not getting what we do. Love is that in God which existed before He would care to exercise mercy or grace. — Lewis Sperry Chafer

It is interesting that love never saved a sinner. The love of God caused God to move in the direction of mercy and grace; it caused Him to exercise mercy and grace. — J. Vernon McGee

Rom 3:16 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Salvation is not only an expression of the love of God; it is also an expression of the justice and righteousness of God.

(2) Exhortation to walk in love and truth (4-6)

(A) John rejoices because elect lady's children were walking in the truth (4)

4 I was overjoyed to find *some of your children walking in truth*, just as we have received a commandment *to do* from the Father.

4 I was very glad to find *some* of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment *to do* from the Father.

4 I was overjoyed to find *some* of your children living truthfully, just as the Father has commanded us.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

– "...of your children" – Jesus was raised in a family of (at least) seven: five sons and two sisters (Matt 13:55-56; Mark 5:3)

— James and Jude became believers after the resurrection; in fact, they each wrote books in the NT that bear their names

— Jesus appeared to James after His resurrection (1 Cor 15:7). The Greek actually indicates "some of thy children" rather than all of them (John 7:5). If our surmise is correct—and it is only a surmise—some of the others also became believers.

– "...walking in truth" – the issue here, as in all these letters, is that love and truth must be practiced ("walked")

— To "walk in the truth" means to obey it. It is easier to study the truth, or even argue about the truth, than it is to obey it

— Knowing the truth is more than giving assent to a series of doctrines; it means that the believer's life is controlled by a love for the truth and a desire to magnify the truth.

(B) Walk in love (5-6)

(a) Basis for the exhortation: old commandment (5)

5 Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had **from the beginning**, that we **love one another**.

5 Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.

5 Dear lady, I am now requesting of you that we all continue to love one another. It is not as though I am writing to give you a new commandment, but one that we have had from the beginning.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

- "...from the beginning" - the recipient was not a latecomer: she was there "from the beginning" (Cf. v5-6). The "we" carries a provocative joint identity.

- "...love one another" - love is a commandment. If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15). Real love is a choice, not an emotion. I choose to love you. When I obey, I do what God tells me to do.

(b) Request articulated (6)

6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you are to walk in it.

6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

6 And this is what demonstrates love: that we live according to God's commandments. Just as you have heard from the beginning what he commanded, you must live by it.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

- We should not presume that any of us are beyond the need for exhortation or encouragement. Why would Mary—a very blessed but very human believer—be any exception? Mary was subject to the same frailties as all of us: pride and doubts, and thus also needed frequent encouragement, counsel, and, perhaps, exhortation.

II. Watch for Antichrists (2 John 7-13)

(1) Warning against false teachers (7-11)

(A) Identification and doctrine of Antichrists (7)

(a) Many (7a)

(b) Deny incarnation (7b)

(c) Deceivers (7c)

(d) Like Antichrist (7d)

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ **as coming** in the flesh. This is the deceiver and **the antichrist**.

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world. They refuse to acknowledge Jesus the Messiah as having become human. Any such person is a deceiver and an antichrist.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

- Here is a clear response to the prevalent Gnostic teachings. They were teaching that Jesus Christ was not really a person, just a phantom. When He walked He didn't leave a footprint! (This is partially Scriptural! - Matt 14:25ff; Mark 6:48ff; John 6:19ff!)
- "...as coming" - it is surprising that the present (continuous) tense is used: Jesus Christ had come and still exists "in the flesh" [see notes/cross-refs below]
- "...the antichrist" - the Greek, *anticristos* has the definite article. The prefix "anti-" actually means "instead of"; the modern use emphasizes "against".
- It is noteworthy that John himself does not use this term "antichrist" in the Book of Revelation

(B) Incentives for rejecting Antichrists (8-9)

(a) Loss of reward (8)

8 Watch yourselves, that you **do not lose** what we have accomplished, but *that* you may receive a full reward.

8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

8 See to it that you don't destroy what we have worked for, but that you receive your full reward.

8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

- "...do not lose" - this "loss" is not a loss of a previously earned crown, but rather the loss of acquiring additional crowns should he go back to the sin nature

— Every moment we spend walking in the flesh instead of walking in the Spirit is a moment that we are out of fellowship with Christ and do not have the opportunity to earn rewards



Woodrow Kroll

Woodrow Kroll, *Facing Your Final Job Review: The Judgment Seat of Christ, Salvation, and Eternal Rewards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 123-124.

“We should never conceive of the loss of rewards as a repossession. God does not take back something he has already awarded to us. At the heavenly bema, we do not suddenly have a quantity of rewards ripped from our hands by the righteous Judge. We are not stripped of rewards as an erring soldier is stripped of his stripes. Not at all... Loss or reward is not like handing back a trophy that was mistakenly given to you. It’s not returning something you earned. It’s forfeiting a reward that you could have earned but failed to do so.”

(b) Denial of God (9)

9 Anyone who **goes too far** and does not remain in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who remains in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

9 Everyone who does not remain true to the teaching of the Messiah, but goes beyond it, does not have God. The person who remains true to the teaching of the Messiah has both the Father and the Son.

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.

- John was not one to suggest that all religious teachings are true in one way or another, and that we should not be critical just as long as people are sincere. To John, there was a deadly difference. He that hath not Christ hath not God.

- "...goes too far" - *parabaino*, to go beyond the limits; to go past as to turn aside; thus, to extend beyond the pale of orthodoxy.

— This is the characteristic of every cult. They always have some new information or insight that goes beyond the clear and express doctrines of God.

— Every cult finds a new way to deny the deity of Jesus Christ.

(C) What to withhold from Antichrists (10-11)

(a) Platform (10a)

(b) Greeting (10b)

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, **do not receive him into your house**, and do not give him a greeting;

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your house*, and do not give him a greeting;

10 If anyone comes to you but does not present his teachings, do not receive him into your house or even welcome him,

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

— "...do not receive him into *your house*" - do not give them a place of influence in your gathering or church

— In this verse, "house" = church because the early church met in homes (Cf. Acts 2:46; 8:3)

— So this verse is instructing us to not give false teachers a "pulpit" in the church. Don't allow them to promote their false teaching, present their false materials, or influence the flock in any way.

— It doesn't say you have to cut off all social contact...you can meet with them one-on-one; it means to not promote their teaching or theology to your church/gathering (in the early church, the church met in homes, Cf. Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Philemon 2)

— It's the idea of ecclesiastical separation, a topic Paul covered numerous times in his epistles (see notes on 2 Thess 3:6)

(c) Assistance (11)

11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

11 because the one who welcomes him shares in his evil deeds.

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

False Teachers

John did not want any of God's children to:

- (1) Give a false teacher the impression that his heretical doctrine was acceptable
- (2) Become infected because of association and possible friendship
- (3) Give the false teacher ammunition to use at the next place he stopped

John is certainly admonishing us to not receive or encourage false teachers representing anti-Christian groups. This is another grave reason that you should investigate everything

you give to as a Christian, because if you are giving to the wrong thing, God considers you a partner in it.

(2) Conclusion (12-13)

(A) Reasons for John's imminent visit (12)

- (a) Too many things to write (12a)
- (b) Desire for a personal visit (12b)
- (c) Complete elect lady's joy (12c)

12 Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to *do* so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made complete.

12 Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to *do* so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.

12 Although I have a great deal to write to you, I would prefer not to use paper and ink.

Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

- This could be simply an allusion to intimacy and imminancy or it could be a precaution to disclosure(s). David said a similar thing: "my tongue is the pen of a ready writer" (Ps 45:1).

(B) Extension of greeting from elect lady's nephews and nieces (13)

13 The children of your chosen sister greet you.

13 The children of your chosen sister greet you.

13 The children of your chosen sister greet you.

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

- This verse also argues for the addressee to be a specific individual; Mary did have a sister (John 19:25)