

The Epistle of II John

Text: II John

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; For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. 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. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 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. 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. 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. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. 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. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

Introduction:

- A. The date of this epistle is uncertain but it was probably written about 85 A. D.
- B. The apostle's address is to a Christian matron and her children (verses 1-3).

1. The Apostle rejoices to find that certain of her family had received, and continued to adorn, the truth.
2. In verses 4-6, he exhorts them to continue to love one another according to the commandment of Christ.
3. He also cautions them against deceivers, and to so watch, that they might not lose the benefit of what they had received in verses 7&8.
4. Verse 9 reminds them of the necessity of abiding in the doctrine of Christ.
5. While verses 10-11 caution them against receiving, or in any way helping, those who did not teach and preach the true doctrine of Christ.
6. In verses 12 & 13 the apostle excuses himself from writing more by promising to pay her and her family a visit in the near future.

I. Verse 1 The elder

“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.”

A. “The elder”

1. At the time of the writing of II John the apostle was a very old man.
2. Most believe that he was about ninety
3. The Apostle John was an apostle. However he was also an “elder” and would have been within his rights to address himself as such.
4. Although in II John, he uses the term elder, not as the name of an office, but as designating his advanced age.

5. Some Biblical Scholars say that John was the oldest of all the apostles. He was the only one who died a natural death.

B. "The Elect Lady"

There are some that say the term "elect lady" refers to the church at Jerusalem

- They also say that the elect sister, 2 John 1:13, is the Church at Ephesus.
 - This is conjecture and does not have any solid backing.
1. The stronger evidence is that it was the proper name of a woman, probably "Kyria."
 2. Some have thought that her name was "Eclecta" which comes from the Greek we translate "elect".
 3. The strongest evidence leads us to believe that that the epistle was sent to some eminent Christian matron, who lived close to Ephesus, who likely, had a Church at her house, or at whose house the apostles and travelling evangelists frequently preached, and were entertained.

C. Whom I love in the truth

1. Whom I love as the Christian religion requires us to love one another.
 - There are two emphatic words found in this book.
 - The first is "love" which is found 4 times.
 - The second is "truth." It is found 5 times.

2. 1 John 4:19-21 clearly shows us that as Christians we are to love one another.

“We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”

3. **“And not I only, but also all they that have known the truth.”**

- She was well known in the Churches
- Many people had heard or witnessed her fidelity
- Perhaps that had partaken of her hospitality
- She had a good report of all Christians in that area.

II. Verse 2:

For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

- A. “For the truth's sake”

- Or on account of the Gospel.

- B. “Which dwelleth in us”

- Or the truth dwells in us, by the grace, which it (the truth) has proclaimed.

- C. “And shall be with us for ever”

1. God will preserve not only the Christian religion but its truth, all its essential doctrines forever.

Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

1 Peter 1:25, “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

2. And those that that abide in the truth shall go whither that truth leads.

Where does knowing the truth lead? It leads one to eternal life in Glory.

III. Verse 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.”

- A. There is no doubt that this salutation, is an apostolic benediction.
 1. The apostle’s love for those that he is writing causes him to pour out blessings upon this worthy Christian family.
 2. From whom does he ask these blessings?
 - From God the Father, the God of all grace.
 - He is the fountain of blessedness.
 - From the Lord Jesus Christ – the author and communicator of heavenly blessings.
 - Note that He is distinguished by this definite character - the Son of the Father
 - He is the unigenito (the only begotten) as no other Son can be.

- This Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, who, with the Father, is also eternal life according to 1 John 1:2.
3. Next we see what the apostle desires from these divine persons (the Godhead, the Trinity).
 - Grace- divine favor and good-will

It is truly grace that any spiritual blessing be conferred on sinful mortals.

- Mercy- free pardon and forgiveness; those who are already rich in grace still have need of continual forgiveness.
- Peace- tranquility of spirit and serenity of conscience, in an assured reconciliation with God

IV. Verse 4

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

- A. “I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth.”
 1. This verse tells us that the “elect lady” was the mother of a family.
 2. She was probably a widow since there is no mention of her husband.
 3. The children mentioned here may either be her children.
 4. The apostle said that he “found of thy children walking in truth”.

- He was glad to hear that some of her children were walking in the truth.
- All of the children born to Christian parents do always become good children or good Christians.

Adam had a Cain; Abraham had an Ishmael, and Isaac an Esau.

- God is pleased to show his discriminating grace in tribes and families, by taking some, and leaving others

It is a great mercy when any are called by grace.

- So it was a great occasion of joy and rejoicing when the Apostle found out that some of the children of this wonderful lady were walking in the truth.
5. We are not told how he came to know this information.
- It could have been through a letter she wrote him.
 - It could have been reported to him by an evangelist or preacher.
 - And in all reality it does not matter how he came to this knowledge.

V. Verse 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.”

A. There is no new commandment.

A. Rather a reminder of the old commandment which is a part of the eternal law of truth that is

founded upon the unalterable nature and eternal will of God, who “is love.”

B. Since God is love, He has required it in his people from the beginning.

- It was written on Adam's heart in a state of innocence.
- It was delivered in the Law of Moses.
- And it was taught by Christ and his apostles from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation.

B. “That which we had from the beginning” is clearly explained.

The command “That we love one another.”

VI. Verse 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.”

- A. “And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.”
- B. God showed us his love by extending grace and salvation unto us.
- C. Our love is shown and proved by walking according to the commandments of God.
- D. Why? Love is the principle of obedience!

VII. Verse 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.”

- A. The “many deceivers”, according to 1 John 4:1 were the Gnostics.
- B. They denied that Jesus was come in the flesh.
 - 1. This teaching was a direct attack at the base of our salvation.
 - 2. The doctrines of the incarnation of Christ are absolutely essential to salvation!
 - 3. Therefore only a deceiver and an antichrist would deny them.

VIII. Verse 8

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

- A. “Look to yourselves.”

Be on your guard against these seducers; watch, pray, love God and each other, and walk in newness of life.

- B. “That we lose not those things which we have wrought.”

Watch yourselves that you do not lose the things which you have earned, but continue in the truth in order that you can receive a full reward.

IX. Verse 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.”

- A. “Whosoever transgresseth”

- 1. This does not speak of the law of God, because we all sin daily, in thought, in word, or deed.

2. It speaks of those who have no true knowledge of God.
 - The truth taught here is, that it is essential to believe the truth or doctrine concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, death, burial, and resurrection.
 - Those who do not (as the Gnostics) are not God's children and have no part of him.
3. He does not have God; for his Father, but rather the devil, the father of lies.

Why? Because he has no true knowledge of God.

4. "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ."

Those who know Christ will obey him, serve him, profess him and believe the truth concerning him.

The evidence of abiding in Christ:

5. "He hath both the Father and the Son."

Those that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, find that their body is a temple of the Holy Trinity. And that they have communion with the Father as their Father, and with the Son as their Saviour and Redeemer.

John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

X. Verse 10

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

- A. This is a stern warning!

1. If anyone comes to your house to preach or testify that does not teach true doctrine (that Jesus is come in the flesh, and has died for the redemption of the world)
2. You are not to allow him into your home.
 - Don't entertain them, don't give them a glass of water, and do not allow them to share their false gospel with you or those in your home.
3. Do not bid him God speed.
 - The usual salutation among friends and those of the same religion in the east is Salam or "Peace be to you.
 - They never use this expression to strangers, except in very rare cases.
 - John is saying "Have no religious connection with him, nor act towards him so as to induce others to believe you acknowledge him as a brother."

XI. Verse 11

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

- A. Do not tell them "God bless you."
- B. Anyone listening should understand that you disagree with their doctrine and do not consider them a Christian brother.
- C. However, a Christian should be physically violent or persecute them.

That is how the Catholic's reacted toward the Baptist. They will stand before God in judgment for their actions.

XII. Verse 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.”

- A. I have many more things that I could write, but I think it best not to write them in a letter, because I hope to visit you shortly, and speak to you in person about those matters.
- B. There is more comfort when friends visit than there is in a letter.

A letter is better than nothing, a phone call is better than a letter, but a visit is best of all.

XIII. Verse 13

“The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.”

- A. Some try to use this verse as proof that “the elect lady” is a church.

However, trusted scholars say there is simply not sufficient evidence to prove the point.

- B. They believe that it was probably her own sister, who lived at Ephesus.
- C. John, knowing both sends her greeting.

Conclusions:

This epistle is remarkable more for the spirit of Christian love which it breathes.

However the teaching of verses 10 & concerning heretical teacher and how such teachers were treated in the apostolic Church is very important.

They did not fellowship with them. They did not aid them or support them, but did not persecute them.