

## 2 John Exegetical Notes

**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;

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There has been much speculation as to who this letter is addressed. Some have identified this as an actual woman and her children, others have seen it as being figurative. The best interpretation appears to be an unnamed woman to whom John is writing in order to encourage her and her children to walk in truth and be careful as to who they extend hospitality.

### Who Is The Addressee?

- 1. Jerome says it is the whole church.**
- 2. Lightfoot, Brooke, and Zahn say some local church that we don't know about.**
- 3. Wordsworth thinks it is the church in Babylon (from 1 Peter 5:13).**
- 4. Some influential lady in the circuit of churches that John ministered to.**
- 5. The lady Electa, taking "elect" to be a proper name.**

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

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If there is any key word in this short letter, it is the word truth. This is not truth in the general sense, but truth in the specific sense, namely, the truth of the Gospel and the truth of God. If there is anything under attack today in the church and in the world it is the truth. We have made truth something that is relative. Truth to one person is not truth to another, and in fact in the New Age movement, there are as many truths as there are people. With the believer this is not so. We have the truth of God, anything other than that is a lie.

**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.

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This is just the standard form of the greeting used in those days on letters.

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

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If there is anything that brings joy to the heart of a pastor or spiritual leader, it is that those he has taught walk in the truth. Perhaps there is no greater disappointment in ministry than to teach the truth for year after year, only to have people abandon it and fall into error.

**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.

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We find here the unique stamp of the Apostle John, namely the topic of love. We are reminded of 1 John 2:7-8 which almost is identical to this verse. We first find this commandment in John 13:34-35 in which Christ tells his disciples that they are to love one another as he loved them. The mark of Christians is that they love one another, and by this the Bible means that we go out of our way to sacrifice our own desires for the needs of others.

**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.

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Christ's commandment to love one another is enhanced by his command to love him. How do we love him? According to John 14:15 if we love him we are to keep his commandments. Thus, our love for others is evidenced by our actions towards them, and our love for Christ is evidenced by our obedience to his commandments. Apparently the lady to whom John is writing and her children were diligent to love others and obey the commandments of Christ.

**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.

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Why is it so necessary to love one another and keep Christ's commandments? It is because many false prophets have gone out into the world. The spirit of Antichrist, as defined by John in 1 John 4:1-3, denies that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh. Anyone who denies the deity of Christ, regardless of what they say, are of the spirit of antichrist.

#### **Are Mormons Christians?**

**One of the interesting discussions I read on the Internet was one in which the question was asked, "are Mormons Christians?" With rare exception, nearly everyone agreed that they were since they believed in Jesus. According to John, anyone who denies Christ is fully God is of the spirit of the antichrist. Therefore, Mormons, who deny the deity of Christ, are no more Christian than Hindus, Buddhists, or any other pagan system of belief.**

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

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Apparently one of the problems facing this woman was the fact that inadvertently she was extending hospitality to those who denied the diety of Christ, and as a result she was in danger of losing part of her reward. God is very adamant regarding the truth, and will not tolerate false teachers. When we tolerate false teachers, we are committing "treason" against Christ by aiding and abetting the enemy.

**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.

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John's point is simple. A false teacher can be identified by their acceptance or rejection of the diety of Christ. Those that do not remain in the true teaching regarding Christ do not have God. Those that affirm the diety of Christ and the truths of the gospel have both the Father and the son.

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

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

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Apparently, as mentioned above, this woman was guilty of extending hospitality to false teachers. In those days, inns were a vile place in which to stay, and as a result it was necessary to extend hospitality to itinerant preachers of the gospel. John warns this woman that to extend hospitality to a true preacher of the gospel was cause for reward, to extend hospitality to a false teacher was cause to lose one's reward. It is a serious thing to aid those who are enemies of the message of the gospel. When we extend hospitality and good wishes to those who come to our door spreading another Gospel, we place ourselves alongside the enemies of God.

**Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagin Heretics?**

**I once had a woman walk out on my teaching when I called Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland heretics (who by the way deny the diety of Christ). This woman, although very kind and loving, is guilty of listening to those who deny the Gospel and may lose part of her reward.**

**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.

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

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John closes this short letter with the salutations of this woman's sister. He also says that there are some other things he wishes to say, but he will wait to say them in person when he visits this woman on one of his trips.