

Title: **2nd JOHN**
 “For the Truth’s Sake”

Text: 2 John 1:1-13

Date: Tuesday Evening — August 17,2003

Tape # Y-39a

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Introduction:

“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”

(2 John 1:1-3).

Though it does not bear his name, it is evident that this epistle was written by the apostle John. When we compare its language (2 John 1:5-9) with that of 1st John (1 John 2:7-8; 3:23; 4:1-3; 5:3), we see that the language used here is the same. John’s purpose in writing this brief epistle is to exhort and encourage us to continue in the truth and faith of the gospel, to walk in love to God and his people, and to avoid false teachers and their doctrines.

THE ELECT LADY

John addresses this epistle to “*the elect lady*.” Did you ever pause to think about what name is used most often in the New Testament to describe God’s people? They are called “*saints*” forty times, “*sons of God*” sixteen times, “*strangers*” six times, “*Christians*” just three times, and “*believers*” just twice. But the term that is used more often than any other, except for “*saints*,” to describe the people of God in the New Testament is “*the elect*.” In fact, the word “*saints*” is but another way of saying “*elect*.” God’s saints are those separated from others, separated from eternity by electing love.

Election was such a commonly known and commonly discussed theme in the early church that when believers spoke to and about one another they used the word “*elect*” to distinguish God’s people from the rest of the world.

Many suggest that this “*elect lady*” was **a certain, believing woman**, and that John wrote this epistle to her and her believing children. Perhaps that is the case. In Christ there is neither male nor female. Both are one in him.

It is certain that our Lord gave special attention to and showed special care for certain women: — the Samaritan woman, — Mary and Martha, — the woman with an issue of blood, — the Syrophenician, and the woman who anointed him for his burial. After his resurrection he appeared to a woman and sent her to tell the disciples that he was alive. If we think of Miriam,

Ruth, Deborah, Esther, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla, Lois and Eunice, we should not be at all surprised to see the Holy Spirit honor and distinguish a certain woman by addressing an apostolic epistle to her.

If the epistle was written to an individual woman and her children, it should be noted that her children were addressed as grown, mature children who were found “*walking in truth*” (v. 4). They were children who had themselves professed faith in Christ and walked in truth.

I think, however, that **John uses the term “*the elect lady*” to refer to a local church.** It really does not matter which, nor is there any need for us to know which. The epistle was written by divine inspiration for us and to us who walk in truth. It is certain that John’s words are written to every child of God in this world, for God’s children are God’s elect. His church is his “*elect lady.*” God’s elect are those chosen by his grace to eternal life in Christ before the world was made (Matt. 24:31; Rom. 8:33; Eph. 1:3-6; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2).

We are not told when the epistle was written, or where John was when he wrote it. But, again, such things are not material. It is God’s Word to us today. May he teach us its message and make it sweet to our souls.

THE TRUTH

“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” (v. 1).

“The elder” — John calls himself an Elder because he was both a pastor and an old man. At the time he wrote this epistle, he was at least a hundred years old.

“Whom I love in the truth” — John expresses his sincere and heartfelt love for this elect lady and her children, whom he and his companions loved in the truth. He speaks of the joy he and his companions, who were lovers of the truth, found in these who walked in the truth.

Believers love all men as men, but God gives his elect a special love for those who are in the family of faith (Gal. 6:10; Titus 3:15).

(Galatians 6:10) "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

(Titus 3:15) "All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen."

Notice the connection between John’s love for God’s saints and their love for the truth. Those who love Christ, who is the Truth, love all who walk in the Truth.

We love one another for Christ's sake. It is he who dwells in us and abides in us forever.

Notice this also — **John speaks to God's elect with great confidence, as well as with great tenderness and affection.** “*The elect lady,*” as John calls her, had in her election all the blessings, benefits, and effects of election. As the bud contains all the future blossoms and foliage of the flower, so God's elect have all the blessings of grace in Christ (Eph. 1:3-6), “*according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.*” **Robert Hawker wrote...**

“Together with this electing grace, there is the calling grace appointed also. ‘*For whom he did predestinate, them he also called*’ (Rom. 8:30). And in the season of that call, there is given the pardoning grace to all sins. So blessedly speaks the Apostle. ‘*And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses*’ (Col. 2:13).

And neither doth the blessing stop here. For justification immediately follows. ‘*Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*’ (Rom. 3:24). And both sanctification and glory bring up the rear, in the sure events involved in the blessed act of God's sovereign love,

when, from all eternity, the Lord chose the church in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:4; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 8:30, 31).”

THE TRUTH'S SAKE

“For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever” (v. 2).

The word “*truth*” occurs five times in the first four verses. It refers both to Christ and to the doctrine of Christ. The two cannot be separated. Truth is more than mere facts about Christ. Truth is Christ himself (John 14:6; 4:24; 8:32; 18:37).

(John 4:24) "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."

(John 8:32) "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

(John 14:6) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

(John 18:37) "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Christ dwells in us and his Word dwells in us, as an inward principle of grace forever (John 17:17; 15:4-7).

(John 15:4-7) "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. (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. (6) If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. (7) If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

(John 17:17) "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

JOHN'S SALUTATION

"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" (v. 3).

John's salutation is like that used by other apostles (1 Tim. 1:2; Rom 1:7), but he characteristically adds, with respect to Christ, that he is the Son of God. This was a special issue to John and it appears that he never missed a chance to state it emphatically (John 1:1; 10:30; 1 John 1:3,7; 4:2,15).

“In truth and love” — These two words, “*truth*” and “*love*,” are used repeatedly in this epistle. They are companions. They cannot be separated. God is light (truth) and God is love. Let them ever be united in our minds and hearts. Truth without love becomes stern, cold and even cruel. Love without truth (if such were possible) would be unstable and without foundation.

GREAT JOY

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

God’s children rejoice when they find others who are God’s children. The Psalmist sang, with regard to God’s church, his “*elect lady*,” — “*Lo! Children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a reward*” (Ps. 127:3).

Apply these words, as we may to an individual household, and see cause for great joy to any parent. To see our children walking in truth is, perhaps, the greatest boon we can experience in this world as believers. When they are blessed with grace, we are blessed with grace!

Even when that is not the case, even when we must, like David, look over our sons and daughters with sorrow, seeing nothing but Absaloms, Adonijahs, and Amnons coming from our loins, let us, as we sigh, “*although my house is not so with God*,” take solace in

God's covenant grace "*ordered in all things and sure*" (2 Sam. 23:5).

Apply this to a pastor looking over a local church he has served or a church with which he has any connection, and the same joy is the expression of a faithful pastor's heart and love. God's servants dance in their hearts when we see his children walking in truth, walking with Christ in the blessed truth of Christ revealed in the gospel.

It brought great joy to the apostle's to find the children of this elect lady "*walking in truth,*" living day by day in a continual, progressive spirit, attitude and conversation which revealed that Christ was in them. They not only professed to know Christ, but their conduct and conversation revealed a living union with him. This is the commandment we have received from the Father (Micah 6:8; 1 John 3:18).

(Micah 6:8) "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

(1 John 3:16-18) "Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. (17) But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (18) My little children,

let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“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” (v.5).

This is the same thing John told us in 1 John 2:7,8. He is probably referring to the words of our Savior in John 13:34. It is that which our Lord taught from the beginning. How sweetly the life of grace in Christ, leads to a life of love. — *“As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him”* (Col. 2:6-7). It is impossible to be otherwise. Where Christ is, there must be fruitfulness in Christ. Where the Spirit of God is the love of Christ shines.

The love John is talking about is much more than warm feelings and emotions about God and one another. We cannot love one another and walk in love if we do not walk in truth, if we do not walk with Christ in the truth he reveals in his Word — *“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”* (v.6).

ANTICHRIST

“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” (v.7).

“Many deceivers have gone out into the world” — John is referring to false teachers and preachers, who are described by their character and work. They are seducers who cause others to go astray. They pretend to be gospel preachers, to love the truth, to be concerned for men's souls, and to desire the glory of God. But they handle the Word deceitfully. They are impostors (1 John 2:18; Matt.7:15,16; 2 Peter 2:1-3).

(Matthew 7:15-16) "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (16) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

(2 Peter 2:1-3) "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

(1 John 2:18) "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

The primary error of these false prophets is their denial of the person and work of Christ. They profess to believe in Christ as a prophet, teacher, healer, a messenger from God, and even the Messiah and the Son of God, but they deny him altogether by denying that he has come in the flesh and accomplished all that the Scriptures declare he would accomplish — The redemption and salvation of his people (Dan. 9:24; Isa. 53:10-11; Matt. 1:21; Heb. 9:12). They do not necessarily deny that he came. They deny that he has effectually accomplished what he came to do, but assert that he merely made redemption and salvation possible.

(Daniel 9:24) "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

These whom John describes as antichrists deny that the Lord Jesus actually...

- Finished the transgression and made an end of sins.
- Brought in everlasting righteousness.
- Fulfilled all the prophets, "*sealed up the vision.*"

- And was anointed as Lord over all because he finished the work.

(Isaiah 53:10-11) "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

He who is the Christ “shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ shall never be discovered a miscarriage! He satisfied the justice of God and the justice of God shall satisfy him. **“He shall see his seed”**...

- Brought out, out of captivity, prison, bondage, and the world.
- Brought in, into his kingdom.
- Brought up, taught and cared for.
- Brought home!

(Matthew 1:21) "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

(Hebrews 9:12) "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."

All who deny, either in word or in doctrine, by statement or implication, that Jesus Christ is God are deceivers and anti-Christ (John 10:30-33; Matt. 1:21-23).

LOOK TO YOURSELVES

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

This is an exhortation to the elect lady and her children to look about them, be aware of these antichrists and their doctrine, take care of themselves and beware of these false teachers and their doctrines (2 Cor. 11:1-4).

(2 Corinthians 11:1-4) "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me. (2) For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. (3) But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (4) For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*."

We must take care not to lose, or throw away, those things that we have wrought by faith, those things that

we profess have been wrought in us by grace, and in the end lose our own souls. If we depart from the gospel of Christ, there remains no sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:26; 6:4-6). Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). If we are not redeemed in him, we have no life or hope (Gal. 4:4,5). Let us persevere in the faith of Christ until we are made like him. This shall be our full reward (Heb. 3:6,14; Col. 1:19-23).

(Colossians 1:19-23) "For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell; (20) And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven. (21) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled (22) In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: (23) If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."

(Hebrews 3:6) "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

(Hebrews 3:14) "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

“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” (v. 9).

“Whosoever transgresseth” —The person who denies the doctrine of Christ, the Messiah, has not, knows not and believes not God. *“The doctrine of Christ”* concerns:

- His person as the Son of God, as truly God, and the union of the two natures — divine and human, in one person.
- His offices as Mediator, Surety, Prophet, Priest and King.
- His redemptive work — his obedience, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension.
- His return to judge and to reign.

This is the doctrine of King Messiah, the doctrine of redemption and eternal glory. The man who abides in the truth of Christ has both the Father and the Son. He has an interest in them and a knowledge of them (John 17:3; 1 John 5:11-13).

RECEIVE THEM NOT

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (v.10).

If anyone comes to your church or your home (pretending to be a gospel preacher) one who does not preach this doctrine but despises and denies it, do not allow him to preach in the house of God and do not entertain him in your home” (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:8,9).

“Neither bid him God speed.” — Do not help him, encourage him, or pray for him. Do not give him the impression that you are sympathetic with him.

“For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (v.11). — Those who wish false teachers well, who encourage them, or who converse with them in a friendly and familiar way instead of reproving them and shunning them as they ought, are aiding and abetting them, supporting them in their attacks on Christ and can be considered partakers in their evil deeds.

CONCLUSION

John concludes this epistle very graciously, expressing his love for these dear saints, and his desire to see them face to face, and by conveying to them the greetings of another gospel church, the elect sister of this elect lady.

“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” (v.12).

Although he had many things to write to them and teach them, he preferred not to do so with paper and ink. This blessed old man hoped to visit God’s dear saints and talk to them personally, so that their joy may be complete.

There is a great value in writing to believers and communicating in various ways, but nothing replaces personal fellowship, exhortation and encouragement (Heb. 10:24,25; 3:13; Col. 3:16).

“The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen” (v.13).

Let us learn (especially gospel preachers) from this short, but gracious epistle of John the elder, how to address God’s elect with words of comfort and consolation in Christ. They are to be spoken to graciously and affectionately, for comfort and edification, to build them up in mutual love, in the fellowship of the Truth, in the fellowship of Christ, not harshly and bitterly.

“There is nothing more strengthening to the Church of God, than when old disciples speak to young ones, concerning God’s purposes in Christ, as manifested in his electing, converting, redeeming, establishing

grace! It is blessedly said by one of old, “*the righteous shall bring forth fruit in his old age, to shew that the Lord is upright.*” I do not presume to say so much, but I humbly ask, did not the Lord the Spirit cause this Epistle to be sent by John to one Elect Lady, to be recorded in the Church, and handed down, through the several ages, to the present hour, on purpose to teach old saints, and especially faithful old ministers, how to speak to the elect children of Christ, in the several stations and characters as they stand in grace?”

Robert Hawker