**Teaching Notes on John’s Second Epistle  
in the New Testament of the Holy Bible  
May 2021**

**2 JOHN (ESV 2016)**

**Greeting**

​ 1 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, 2 because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

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

**Message**

4 I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. 5 And now I ask you, dear 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. 6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

**Warning**

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.  8 Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. 9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

**Closing**

12 Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

13 The children of your elect sister greet you.

**GREEK TEXT**

​**1** Ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς, οὓς ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, καὶ οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἐγνωκότες τὴν ἀλήθειαν, **2** διὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν τὴν μένουσαν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ μεθ’ ἡμῶν ἔσται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· **3** ἔσται μεθ’ ἡμῶν χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη παρὰ θεοῦ πατρός, καὶ παρὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ πατρός, ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἀγάπῃ.

**4** Ἐχάρην λίαν ὅτι εὕρηκα ἐκ τῶν τέκνων σου περιπατοῦντας ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, καθὼς ἐντολὴν ἐλάβομεν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός. **5** καὶ νῦν ἐρωτῶ σε, κυρία, οὐχ ὡς ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφων σοι ἀλλὰ ἣν εἴχομεν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους. **6** καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, ἵνα περιπατῶμεν κατὰ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ· αὕτη ἡ ἐντολή ἐστιν, καθὼς ἠκούσατε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῇ περιπατῆτε.

**7** ὅτι πολλοὶ πλάνοι ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸν κόσμον, οἱ μὴ ὁμολογοῦντες Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐρχόμενον ἐν σαρκί· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ πλάνος καὶ ὁ ἀντίχριστος. **8** βλέπετε ἑαυτούς, ἵνα μὴ ἀπολέσητε ἃ εἰργασάμεθα, ἀλλὰ μισθὸν πλήρη ἀπολάβητε. **9** πᾶς ὁ προάγων καὶ μὴ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεὸν οὐκ ἔχει· ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ, οὗτος καὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει. **10** εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ταύτην τὴν διδαχὴν οὐ φέρει, μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε· **11** ὁ λέγων γὰρ αὐτῷ χαίρειν κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς.

**12** Πολλὰ ἔχων ὑμῖν γράφειν οὐκ ἐβουλήθην διὰ χάρτου καὶ μέλανος, ἀλλὰ ἐλπίζω γενέσθαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ στόμα πρὸς στόμα λαλῆσαι, ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν πεπληρωμένη ᾖ.

**13** Ἀσπάζεταί σε τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου τῆς ἐκλεκτῆς.

**TEXTUAL VARIANTS IN 2 JOHN**

3 Some ancient manuscripts of 2 John read, “Lord Jesus Christ.”

8 Two ancient manuscripts read, “we not lose” instead of “you not lose.”

9 From the 9th century, some manuscripts read, “who transgresses” instead of “who goes on ahead.”

12 Some ancient manuscripts read, “your joy” (hémôn) instead of “our joy” (humôn).

**GRAMMATICAL DIAGRAM**

**1**

The elder > to an elect lady and to her children

whom (masculine plural)

I | love in truth

and not I alone

but also

all those having known > the truth

**2** because of the truth

that resides in us

and

will be

        with us forever

**3**

 grace  mercy  peace  | will be

with us

from Father God

and

 from Jesus Christ

               the Father’s Son

             in truth and love

**4**

[I] | rejoice much

because

              [I] | have found > walking

                          your children

            in truth

            as

           [ we ] | received > commandment

  From the Father

**5**

and now

 [I] |ask < you lady > [commandment]

               as writing < to you > commandment

not a new

                but which

  [we] | have

                    From beginning

             [we] | walk

  by his commandments

that

 [we] | keep loving > one another

**6**

and

this | is | the love

           that

            [we] | keep walking

       By his commandments

this | is | the commandment

           that

            [we] | keep walking

         by it

 as

               [we] | heard

       from the beginning

**7**

for

many deceivers | have gone out

         into the world

 those | not professing > Jesus| Christ

     having come in flesh

This | is | the deceiver and the antichrist

**8**

[you] | see > yourselves

that

       [you] |should not lose > which you laboured

but

       [you] | shoud receive > full reward

**9**

all | οὐκ ἔχει > θεὸν

 go forth

who and

not remaining

In the Christ’s teaching

this one | has > both the Father and the Son

he | remaining

in the teaching

**10**

if

comes to you

any and

bears not > this teaching

                  receive not > him

[you] | and

say not > ‘welcome’ < to him

**11**

for

he | shares in his evil works

saying > welcome < to him

**12**

[Ι] | did not want > to write < to you

          having many

but

    to come to you

     hope and

    to speak mouth to mouth

     that

    your joy | be | made full

**13**

the children | greet > you

  your elect sister

**BACKGROUND**

1. John was one of Jesus’ 12 appointed apostles, an eyewitness to his baptism, to his miracles, to his transfiguration, and to his resurrection.

2. John earlier wrote the Gospel of John, demonstrating that Jesus was both God in human flesh, and the awaited Messiah.

3. John later dwelt at Ephesus where he served as chef “elder” over many churches.

4. In the early centuries, as in many countries today, Christians often gathered in many small “daughter” churches that belonged to a big “mother” church.

5. The Christians were now in their 2nd and 3rd generations and had been multiplying churches in many regions.

6. Some Jewish missionaries were teaching that Jesus was not a real Messiah (Christ).

7. Some Gentile missionaries were teaching that Jesus was only human, and that “Christ” was a kind of spirit that came onto Jesus.

**STRUCTURE**

“2 John is written in a standard epistolary format characteristic of first century letters.” —Harris

**I. Greeting, 1-3**

John loves Christians in distant churches, because God’s Truth dwells in them.

**II. Message, 4-6**

We Christians love one another, because we love God and obey his commandments.

**III. Warning, 7-11**

Deceivers reject Jesus’ teaching, and deny that he was the Messiah.

Protect your work and your rewards.

**IV. Closing, 12-13**

John hopes to come speak with the Christians, so they may have full joy.

**COMMENTARY**

**1 The elder**

They knew who he was. The Apostle had been an eye-and-ear witness to Jesus and to his teaching, and was now an overseer of churches at Ephesus in Asia Minor. (See Lexicon note 1.)

**1 Elect Lady and her children**

Not a lady named Elect, but a distant congregation, with its house churches and their members. (See Lexicon note 2.)

**2 Truth that abides**

**1.** A title of Jesus Christ who called himself “the truth,” John 14.6

**2.** The indwelling Holy Spirit of truth, John 14.16-17

**2** **Father and Son**

(See doctrine note 2, 9.)

**3 Will be with us**

Not a prayer (“may be”) but a promise (“will be”) to reassure Christians in a distant city and towns.

**3** **(Lord) Jesus Christ.**

(See textual note 3.)

**3** **Christ / Messiah**

(See doctrine not 3, 7.)

**4 Live according to the Truth**

These are genuine Christians who hold to Jesus’ teaching about himself.

**4 Found**

“Found” is a suitable verb that goes with having “joy.”

**4 Some children**

All those church members whom John had met. He is not saying that only some of the members were living by the truth.

**4, 6 Live / walk**

To conduct ourselves in ways that honour Jesus the Messiah (Christ), by obeying his commandments.

**5** **write to you**

(See doctrine note 5, 6.)

**5 Love one another**

• The commandment = “love one another,” even those whom we may not like.

• Present tense verb = keep on loving fellow Christians, as Jesus had commanded. John 13:34.

• To show love to fellow Christians remains proof that we have believed in Jesus as Messiah.

• When one adheres to false teachers, he departs from the Christian community, ceasing to love the brethren.

**6 This is love**

To love God = to obey his commandments. John 14:15; 15:14; 1 John 5.3

Believe Jesus’ teaching **** Love God **** Obey his commandments **** Love one another

**6 From the beginning**

False teachers were infiltrating Christian churches, denying that Jesus be the Messiah in human flesh, and then leading folk out of their churches.

**6 Walk in it**

“It” in Greek is a grammatical feminine pronoun, relating back to a feminine noun. There are three feminine antecedent nouns: “truth,” 46 words before, “love,” 16 words earlier, and “commandment,” nearest and most likely antecedent: “walk by that commandment.” (See grammar note 6.)

**7 For / because**

The reasons for which John reminds Christians to keep showing love one for another.

**7 Many deceivers**

1. Some Jews and their converts were denying that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ).

2. Some Gentiles and their students were teaching that the Christ was a spirit that dwelt with Jesus for a while.

**7 Jesus Christ coming in the flesh**

Christians confess that Jesus = the Messiah (Christ) who came in human flesh, which refers to Jesus’ incarnation and birth. (See grammar notes 7. See doctrine note 7.)

**7 The deceiver and the antichrist**

John compares false teachers to the Devil who deceives humans and opposes Jesus, 1 John 2:18.

**8 What we have worked for**

Both the apostles’ missionary work and local believers’ evangelistic work.   
(See text note 8.)

**8 Watch yourselves**

The deceivers were seeking to dissuade Christians from their faith, and to turn them away from Christian churches.

**8 Full reward**

* Church leaders must keep teaching Christians the truth about Jesus Christ, warning them about deceivers, lest those leaders and Christians lose their future rewards.
* God will reward faith in the real Jesus Christ, will reward pastoral work, will reward the showing of love to fellow Christians, and will reward evangelistic work.

**9 Who goes on ahead and does not abide**

The verb means to “lead the way,” by leading others into error by inventing a different Christology. (See grammar note 9. See text note 9.)

**9 The teaching** **of Christ**

This is the teaching that Christ gave about himself, for it has more authority in the Churches than does Christians’ teaching about him. (See grammar note 9.) John 17:16-17; 1 John 2:27

**9 who abides**

The Greek reads, “The ***one*** abiding in the teaching, ***this one*** also has the Father and the Son,” whereas those not abiding in Christ’s teaching do not even have God. 1 John 2:24

**9 Have God**

To “have God” is John’s shorthand expression for faith, knowledge and experience related to God.

**10 If**

Christians were to remain watchful for false teachers. (See grammar note 10.)

**10 Your house**

Since the “lady” and her “sister” were churches, their “house” likely refers to any place where Christians gathered, which was typically in various homes. (See grammar note.)

**11 Evil deeds**

1. Deceit, parading as Christian teachers.

2. Their false teaching about Jesus.

3. Their failure to love Christians.

**12 Your / our joy.**

(See text note 12.)

**SPECIAL VOCABULARY**

**1. Elder (Presbyter)**

1. Israelite community leaders, Deut. 19.12

2. Aged gentlemen, John 8.9

3. Officials in Jewish synagogues, Mark 15.1

4. Hellenistic (Greek) magistrates

5. Christian church leaders, Acts 15.4

6. Divine beings in heaven, Rev. 4.4

**2. Elect**

Christians churches have been chosen by God to conduct his business on earth, just as Israel had formerly been chosen.

**3. You**

In verses 6 trough 12, “you” is a plural pronoun referring to all of the house churches and their members in a region.

**GRAMMAR**

**6 “walk in it”**

“It” in Greek is a grammatical feminine, relating back to a feminine noun. There are three such feminine nouns:   
(1) “truth,” 46 words before,   
(2) “love,” 16 words earlier, and  
(3) “commandment,” nearest and most likely antecedent: “walk by that commandment.”

**7 “Jesus Christ in the flesh”**

Translate, “Jesus *as* Christ.” The double accusative (object of the verb “confess”) makes **Jesus** the *object* complement of the verb “confess,” and **Christ** the *predicate* complement, as in 1 John 4:2.

**7 Coming**

The present tense participle relates either:

1. To the past: Jesus incarnation lading to his birth.

2. To the future: Jesus’ awaited bodily return.

3. To both: Jesus was, remains and will return as the Christ in human flesh.

**9 Who goes on ahead and does not abide**

The two participles, “leading” and “abiding,” are preceded by a single article (“the”) and are joined by the conjunction “and,” which implies that this is the same person or persons.

**9 The teaching of Christ**

This could mean Christian teaching about Christ (*objective* genitive), or Christ’s teaching about himself (*subjective* genitive).

We choose the latter, for it has more authority in the Churches than does human opinions about him.

**10 If**

Grammatical “first class” condition, which assumes reality for the sake of argument. (The particle ***ei*** followed by a verb in the indication mood.)

**CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES**

**2, 9 The Father and the Son**

The One True God exists as the invisible *Father* in heaven and the visible *Son* on earth. (God is also the in visible Holy Spirit who dwells in and amongst Christians.)

**3, 7 The Messiah (Christ)**

The ancient Scriptures teach that someone would come into the world a great, final prophet, priest and king, whom believers called *Messiah* in Hebrew, *Christ* in Greek. Christians believe that Jesus is the Christ.

**5, 6 Holy Scripture.**

John was one of the twelve whom Jesus appointed apostles, promising them the Holy Spirit who would remind them of all that Jesus had taught them.

Thus, for Christians, John’s letters have become Scripture that they believe and obey.

**7 The Incarnation**

The One True God became a human being by being born as Jesus Christ. Thus, Jesus remains fully God and fully human.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Home Work**

Read through 2 John three times, in different versions. (See biblehub.com)

Jot down notes and queries that you want to discuss in a bible-study group.

**Group Work**

Form small discussion groups of two to five persons, and discuss together any one of these queries:

1) What virtues describe true Christians?

2) What dangers does John describe?

3) What similar dangers exist, today?

4) What must we Christians do about such dangers?

Report back to the big group on what your small group agreed on.

**Pastoral Work**

Instruct church elders and teachers in the truth about Jesus Christ and his commandment “to love one another.”

Coach small group and house-church leaders to explain the truth about Jesus Christ to seekers and to Christians, warning them about deceivers who want to teach them.

Learn from those leaders what Christians actually believe and say about Jesus. Then, agree on a plan to teach the truth about Jesus, correcting their errors.