

Outline of the Book of 2 John

Introduction:

A complete study of the author, content, purpose and dates of the three epistles, i.e., 1, 2, and 3 John, is discussed in the introduction of the 1 John outline.

The book of 2 John places great importance on the saints unity, fellowship, and love among each other. These relationships are only fully realized through a united knowledge, understanding, and common abiding in truth. The truth is the “*gospel of our salvation*” (Ephesians 1:13). The results of walking in truth is joy and peace. This joy and peace exist between the faithful and God and the faithful and others who strive to please God in this life (2 John 1:3-4). The apostle John brought these points out to the “*elect lady*” to whom this epistle is addressed. John issues a warning to the elect lady and all of us today saying, “*Look to yourselves, that ye loose not the things which we have wrought but that ye receive a full reward*” (2 John 8). Love and abiding in truth will bring great spiritual success now and forevermore.

John warns the “*elect lady*” that many false teachers had gone forth in the world (2 John 1:7). These men and women (“*whosoever*” - 2 John 9) had the capacity to deceive the saints and cause them to loose their mutual fellowship, unity, love, and eternal soul. The elect lady is warned to be on guard against these teachers (2 John 1:8). A test is given at 2 John 9 that resembles the test of 1 John 3:10; 4:6. Those who do not abide in the teachings of Jesus Christ have no part in fellowship with God or brethren (2 John 1:9). John warned the elect lady not to be receptive to nor support anyone who would bring other doctrines before her. John concluded the letter by expressing his earnest desire to see her face to face.

A brief overview helps us to understand the events during the days 2 John was written. There continued to be men and women who went about preaching doctrines of men and leading astray many brethren. The unity, fellowship, and love of the church was threatened then and now by these deceivers. John’s plea, to his beloved elect lady in the truth, was to know God’s word so that she would be able to distinguish the “*spirit of error from the spirit of truth*” (see 1 John 4:6). To give those in error an ear is to make oneself susceptible to falling from the grace of God to another doctrine (see Galatians 1:6-7). The battle for souls was waged then and now. Let us expose and never give place to false teachers for the sake of our own eternal soul, their soul, and the souls of others who may be swayed by their erring doctrines (Ephesians 5:11).

Chapter I

I. Salutation (1:1-3):

A. “*The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth;*” (1:1).

1. Following the premise that John is the author of this epistle, “*the elder*” would be a description of the apostle. The word “*elder*” (*presbuteros*) is “an old man, the elder, a chief, president... an elder of the Jewish Council, N.T., etc.: an elder of the church, presbyter” (LS 668). Whether John intended the label to describe his position in the church (1 Timothy 3:1-7) or his age is not quite clear.
2. John addressed this second epistle to “*the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth.*”
 - a. Who is the “*elect lady*?” (*eklektov kuria*)
 - 2a. She has children (1:1, 4).
 - 2b. She has a sister (1:12).

- b. The Greek word *Kuria* is referenced in the American Standard Bible as “*Cyria*.” Liddell and Scott define the word as “feminine of *kurios*; a lord, master: the head of a family, master of a house... later, *kurie* was a form of respectful address, like sir, N.T.” (458).
 - c. There are two schools of thought as to the identity of the “elect lady.” First, there is the belief that she is a literal person (one called and obedient to God’s word; cf. Romans 8:30ff). The address, “*elect lady*” is a respectful address to a woman of great faith that John knew. The second school of thought is that the “elect lady” is the church. Difficulties with this conclusion is that the “*elect lady*” has children (2 John 1:1, 4) and a sister (2 John 1:12).
3. Not only John, but all others who love truth loved the elect lady “*in truth*” (cf. 1 John 3:18; Psalms 119:63). Truth (divine revelation) unites Christians into one unity no matter where one lives and in no matter what point of history one exists. This one truth unites all. There is a camaraderie that exists among the faithful children of God. We communicate with each other regarding the faith of individuals (Acts 18:27) and the faith of certain churches (Romans 16:1ff). Each church is autonomous; however, communication in truth exists.
- B. “*For the truth’s sake which abideth in us, and it shall be with us for ever:*” (1:2).
- 1. What is the “*truth*?” Paul told us that it is the “*gospel of your salvation*” (Ephesians 1:13). John said, “*As for you, let that abide in you (the truth) which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal*” (1 John 2:24-25).
 - 2. For the sake of truth (revelation and instructions for one’s heavenly abode), John loved this woman and her faithful children. This truth abides in “*us, and it shall be with us for ever.*”
 - a. The word “*us*” is key to understanding the meaning here. The plural pronoun antecedes all who would love, abide, not forsake, pervert, put their hope, and trust in the truth.
 - b. Here is a statement of unity that surpasses all other forms of camaraderie that this earth and man may share. Though soldiers of war, fellow athletes, musicians, and co-workers may share a united goal their unity cannot be compared to the oneness of the true Christian. The Christian shares the same eternal purpose as other Christians (John 17:20-21). The saints of God are so united that when one hurts all hurt and when one is honored all are honored (1 Corinthians 12:25-27). The church of God is comprised of a united people (Ephesians 4:3). Unity in the church is based upon the truth and nothing but the truth and is indeed pleasant (Psalms 133:1) (see study # 1; Unity of the Saints).
- C. “*Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love*” (1:3).
- 1. “*Grace*” (*charis*) is “a favor done or returned, a grace, kindness, boon, to confer a favor on one, to please him, do a thing to oblige him... to withhold a return for what one has received” (LS 883). Paul said that, “*the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world;*” (Titus 2:11-12). The act of kindness or favor bestowed upon the one “*in Christ*” (1 John 5:20) (baptized for the remission of sins; cf. Galatians 3:26-27) is forgiveness of sins (see Ephesians 1:7). This has everything to do with the love of God revealed in truth (cf. 1 John 3:16; 4:8-9).
 - 2. “*Mercy*” (*eleos*) is “pity, mercy, compassion” (LS 249). God is kind (gracious) in that His “*mercy*” (He pities and has compassion on the sinner; cf. 2 Peter 3:9) is expressed toward man through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The sacrifice of Jesus affords man the opportunity to have the removal (remission) of sins (Matthew 1:21). Paul said, “*but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved...)*” (Ephesians 2:4-5). To Titus Paul wrote, “*But when the kindness of God our Savior, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*” (Titus 3:5-7).

3. *“Peace” (eirene)* is “time of peace... peace is made.. to make peace... to keep peace” (LS 230). Tranquility and serenity in this life is the consequence of abiding in the truths of God. When one’s sins are forgiven, the guilt associated with the sin is removed as well (cf. Hebrews 9:14). Jesus therefore said, *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”* (John 14:27). Again, the Lord said, *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33). So the apostle Paul said, *“Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;”* (Romans 5:1).
4. All who fear God, reverence his divine authority, and seek to know truth are united in this truth and thereby share in God’s grace, mercy and peace.

II. Abide in the Teachings of Christ to keep God’s grace, mercy and peace (1:3-11):

- A. *“I rejoice greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father”* (1:4).
 1. When true unity exists among brethren, we not only hurt when they hurt and are honored when they are honored, but we also rejoice together. The bond that unites Christians is truth. When Christians are united in the purpose of truth (obtaining grace, mercy and peace through Jesus Christ), it causes great joy in each other. Each saint *“walking in truth”* causes the others joy. To *“walk” (peripateo)* is “used metaphorically as to walk, i.e. live” (LS 629). Here are two specific character traits of the Christian’s life; i.e., peace and joy.
 2. To walk in truth has the consequence of joy and peace. Interestingly, God commands that we so walk (Ephesians 4:1-2; 1 John 1:5; 2:6), and thereby commands that we live in joy and peace.
- B. *“And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another”* (1:5).
 1. To *“beseech” (erotao)* is to “ask something of one, to be asked” (LS 317). John asked this lady (and his own self) to love others as they love in truth. The truth had abided in them from the *“beginning”* of their obedience (cf. 1 John 2:24). A major theme in 1 John is the concept of Christians not sinning (see 1 John 2:1) and secondly to love your brother (see 1 John 2:9; 3:10; 4:7ff). While it is not ok to sin it is equally not ok to not love your brother (1 John 3:11-12).
 2. This love is the love of God for *“God is love”* (see 1 John 4:8). The word *“love” (agape)* is defined as “brotherly love” (LS 4). “Love, generosity, kindly concern, devotedness” (Moulton 2). Love equals “a strong affection (fond or tender feeling toward) for or attachment to another person based on regard or shared experiences or interests” (AHD 744). An interesting bond exist between the two words fellowship and love. Fellowship is the idea of people sharing something together. The saints share a common goal of heaven. They share in a common love for God and His divine standard. Such commonality puts them in a relationship with each other. There is a way to feel and act toward each other and there is where love comes in. We care about each other. The saints want the best for each other. We will be kind and concerned for each other (consider all the traits of love listed in 1 Corinthians 13:1ff).
 3. Consider these characteristics of love as revealed in the Bible (see study #):
 - a. To love is to care about one's spiritual wellbeing (see 1 John 4:10; Acts 20:26).
 - b. To love is to care about others physical needs (1 John 3:17).
 - c. To love another is to be kind, patient, without pride, selfless, does not keep track of one's evil deeds done to me but rather seeks to help that person, rejoices in truth, hopes and endures in all things. Love never fails (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-8).
 - d. To love another is to be begotten of God: 1) To be begotten of God is to do acts of righteousness (1 John 2:29), to not sin because truth abides within the conscience (1 John 3:9), to love one another (1 John 4:7).
 - e. To love another is to *“know God”* (i.e., to keep the commandments of God - 1 John 2:4 and John 14:15).

4. The joy, unity and peace saints share together are a consequence of said love. The test of true love is whether or not one walks by the truths of God's word and loves his or her brethren (1 John 3:10).
- C. *“And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it.”* (1:6).
1. Love is equated to *“walking (living) after his commandments.”*
 2. The saint's unity and fellowship are founded in love. Love will manifest itself in one's life through keeping God's commandments. All who do so are united in purpose.
- D. *“For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist”* (1:7).
1. The unity among the saints that is based upon truth and love can be ruined by one who does not have the same fear and reverence for God. John warns the elect lady and thereby warns us of this fact. Not everyone who lays claims to loving God truly do (see Matthew 7:21).
 2. This verse helps us identify who a false teacher is. Consider the fact that one who *“deceives”* and is *“antichrist”* is one who has not *“confessed that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh.”* The study of 1 John 4 concluded the following regarding the one who will not confess that Jesus Christ comes in the flesh:
 - a. To *“confess that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh”* is to be *“of God”* (1 John 4:2).
 - b. To be *“of God”* is to *“believe that Jesus is the Christ”* and to be *“begotten of God”* (1 John 5:1).
 - c. To confess Jesus came in the flesh is to be of God. To be of God is to believe that Jesus is the Christ. To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to be begotten of God. To be begotten of God is to *“overcome the world”* (1 John 4:4; 5:5) and to do *“righteousness”* (1 John 2:29).
 - d. One who does not righteousness is not *“of God”* (1 John 3:10).
 - e. One that does not righteousness while claiming to be righteous is a *“liar”* (1 John 1:6; 2:4).
 - f. A liar (one who says he is righteous but is not) is one who *“denies that Jesus is the Christ”* (1 John 2:22). Such a one has the *“spirit of antichrist”* (1 John 2:22; 4:2).
 - g. Where do we read of motive behind the false teacher? What we do read are facts.
 - 2a. One who is in fellowship with God is one who keeps God's commandments and walks in the light (1 John 1:5-6). One not in fellowship with God is in sin (1 John 1:6).
 - 2b. One that does not abide in the teachings of Christ is not of God (1 John 3:10). One that is not *“of God”* has denied that Jesus is the Christ and that He has come in the flesh. Such a one is a liar and has the spirit of antichrist.
 - 2c. We are either of God or not of God; there is no middle position. We either do righteousness or unrighteousness; there is no middle position. We either teach truth or teach error; there is no middle position. One is either a preacher of truth or a preacher of error; there is no middle teaching. One is either a false teacher or a truth teacher; there is no middle ground (see study # 3; Who is a False Teacher).
 3. The *“many deceivers”* describes what those who are not *“of God”* are; they are *“antichrist.”* The word *“deceivers”* (*planos*) are those who *“leads astray, cheating, deceiving...”* (LS 643). Does this describe the character of the false teacher or does it explain the outcome of the false teacher's doctrine? When one teaches false doctrines from the so-called *“sincere heart,”* he has deceived and led someone astray. That is a fact. Let us assume that I am the one wrong regarding who a false teacher is. I am very *“sincere”* at this moment when I claim that a false teacher is defined by his teaching and not by his character. Others (Ed Harrel, Bob Owen, Jesse Jenkins etc.) claim that a false teacher is one with a *“flawed character.”* Now, I teach that they are wrong as they teach that I am wrong. Question: Are we not both persuading someone by our *“sincere”* teaching? If one of us is wrong (and one is), then one of us is deceiving (leading some astray). This is a simple fact. It was never anyone's intention to lead others away from the grace of God, but it happened nonetheless! Therefore, false teaching is false teaching no matter who does it and no matter what the motive behind said teaching is. Such activity is to deny the authority of Jesus Christ; i.e., be *“antichrist.”* The word *“false teacher,”* as found in 2 Peter 2:1, is *“pseudodidaskalos”* in Greek meaning, *“a false teacher”* (LS 900).

The prefix *pseudo* is defined as “to cheat by lies, beguile... to be deceived, mistaken in or about a thing, mistaken in opinion. Of statements, to be untrue” (LS 901). When a false teacher speaks, he is identified by his ‘mistaken statements that do not represent truth that deceive people.’ The words are a “falsehood, untruth, lie” (LS 901). John states that “*no lie is of the truth*” (1 John 2:21).

4. The definite article “*the*” in front of “*antichrist*” in this verse indicates the one erroneous spirit displayed by any who are such a mind (cf. Revelation 17:13). One lie that is not of the truth and many liars!
- E. “*Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward*” (1:8).
1. Clearly John implied that it is possible for this elect lady to take on the spirit of the antichrist, speak lies and lose her reward of heaven (see study # 4; Apostasy).
 2. Therefore the admonition, “*look to yourselves*” (the lady and her children) lest you be deceived and become a deceiver. The affects of false teaching are deception and loss of one's salvation. When truth is lost so is the mutual fellowship, unity, and love for the brethren (see study # 5; The Affects of False Teaching).
- F. “*Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son*” (1:9).
1. “*Whosoever*” represents any and all of humanity. One who does not abide in the truth (whether that person be a baptized Christian or reprobate of the world) does not have any part of God (another result of false teaching) (see study # 5).
 2. To “*go onward*” (*parabaino*) is to “go by the side of... standing beside... to pass beside or beyond, to overstep, transgress” (LS 593). When one transgresses, bypasses, or goes beyond divine truths they have greatly erred.
 3. The context of this short book demands that the “*teachings of Christ*” be the truth.
 - a. Christian's love for each other is “*in truth*” (1:1).
 - b. Truth is the source of instructions regarding our love for one another (1:2).
 - c. Truth reveals the grace, mercy and peace afforded by God (1:3).
 - d. Christians walking in truth are a joy to others who walk in truth (1:4).
 - e. God's commandment (truth) is that we love one another (1:5).
 - f. God commands that the Christian walk in truth (commandments) (1:6).
 - g. Deceivers and antichrist do not receive the truth (1:7).
 - h. Christians are not to be deceived by false teachers but keep the reward of heaven revealed in truth close to their hearts (1:8).
 4. Individuals who ‘overstep’ and not “*abide*” (take up residency in) in truth “*hath not God*” (cf. 1 John 2:3, 23, 3:6, 10; 5:12). John said, “*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also. As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father.*” (1 John 2:23).
 5. What abided in the saints “*from the beginning*” that puts one “*in the Son and in the Father*?”
 - a. The Word of God (cf. 1 John 2:5, 24).
 - b. Walking in the steps of Jesus (cf. 1 John 2:6).
 - c. Abiding in the light (cf. 1 John 2:10).
 - d. Notice that denying the Son and Father (1 John 2:23) is equivalent to not abiding in the word of God, life of Jesus and light of God. The one who does such “*hath not God*” (2 John 9).
 6. To deny Jesus is to deny the Father; such a one hath not God (1 John 2:22; 2 John 7). To confess the Son (Jesus) is to have the Father, and to have the Father is to abide in the teachings of Jesus (truth) (1 John 2:22-23; 2 John 9).
 7. John gives the elect lady a test to perform so that her fellowship, unity, and love with God and brethren remains in tact (see study # 6; Put Teachers to the Test).

- G. “*If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works*” (1:10-11).
1. The “*any one*” of verse 10-11 is the “*whosoever*” of verse 9. One as such that “*comes unto you*” (*erchetai*) is to “come or go... I intend to say... to come to speech with... to come within a little of, be near a thing” (LS 317). To “*bringeth*” (*phero*) is to “to bear or carry a load, to bear, bear along, implying motion... to bring, fetch... to bring with one, or for one’s own use... to bring, offer, present, ... to produce, bring forward, cite, to bring one word, to tell, announce” (LS 858).
 2. Here is one that hath not God bringing or citing speech that is contrary to the teachings of Jesus; he is a false teacher. Please note that this instruction does not apply to the ungodly of the world who we work with or go to school with. We may have identified the worldly people's view of sin and understand that it is completely different than ours and that they are hopelessly lost in sin; however, we do not shun them. Let us understand what John is saying here.
 3. Such a one John admonished, “*receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting...*”
 - a. To “*receive*” (*lambano*) is to “take, **to take hold of**, grasp, seize... to catch, come upon, overtake, as an enemy... to take as an assistant... to apprehend by the senses, **to seize with the mind**, apprehend, comprehend... to take, i.e., understand, a thing so and so” (LS 463). *Lambano* is used at 1 John 5:9 where John said, “*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son.*” (If we accept {receive} the testimony of men should we not even more receive the testimony of God?)).
 - b. It seems clear that the word *lambano* indicates an acceptance, ‘seizure’ or a taking hold of. One who would take hold of false teachings would not be of God.
 - c. Here is what we have to this point. A false teacher cites speech that contradicts the word of God. The event under consideration is **a religious discussion** you may have with another (not a common discussion at work with an unbeliever). I am commanded not to take hold of his teaching (receive) “*into your house.*” The word “*house*” (*oikia*) is “a building, house, dwelling... household, domestic establishment” (LS 545). The word is used metaphorically to imply the housing of the soul (2 Corinthians 5:1) and a word indicating the mind (2 Timothy 3:6). It seems that there can be two meanings here. First, it may be that John was condemning a Christian who would accept or seize false teachings into his mind (house). Second, it could be that John condemned the acceptance of false teachers into one’s dwelling place with approval of their doctrine (cf. comments on 3 Jn. 8). The first seems more plausible to the context. The idea is to not hear, believe, and be deceived in mind by a false teacher who does not bring the teachings of Christ (i.e., the unifying, fellowshiping, and loving truth).
 4. Last, John stated, “*and give him no greeting.*” The antecedent of “*him*” is the false teacher of the context who brings another doctrine. The word “*greeting*” (*chairo*) is “to rejoice, be glad, **be delighted**... to rejoice at, be delighted with, take delight... a common form of greeting, at meeting, hail, welcome... at taking leave and parting, fare thee well, farewell, good-bye... **glad, joyful, delighted**” (LS 878). The admonition to the elect lady is that she not be delighted and joyful with the false teacher. She should not greet him as though all were well and good. The mind is not to be off guard nor give place for false teachings! To give such a one a joyous and delighted reply is naturally to “*partake in his evil works.*”
 - a. To “*partake*” (*koinoneo*) is the common translation for fellowship (share). One who is delighted and joyous with the false teacher is one who shares in his evil works. The works are evil because they lead one astray from heaven. If I am discussing a spiritual matter with someone and they do not speak words of truth I am to identify the error, not be deceived by it (i.e., take them into my house), and neither am I to be joyous and delighted over the information. My demeanor is thereby serious when the word of God is perverted by another.

- b. The argument is now complete. A Christian's joy and delight is not in false teachers but in those who share a like precious love for truth (cf. 2 John 1-4). Our love for men's souls will prevent us from having any joy at the sight of the erring.

III. John's farewell to the elect lady and her faithful children (1:12-13):

- A. *"Having many things to write unto you, I would not write them with paper and ink: but I hope to come unto you, and speak face to face, that your joy may be made full"* (1:12)
- B. *"The children of thine elect sister salute thee"* (1:13).
 - 1. A reciprocating joy based on one's stand in truth.
 - 2. The word "*salute*" (*aspazomai*) is to "welcome kindly, bid welcome, greet...; as the common form on meeting" (LS 124). The word "*salute*" is an apparent word that indicates shared Biblical fellowship. No such "*salute*" was to be given to those who brought contrary doctrines (2 John 9-11). Romans 16 used the word "*salute*" on a multitude of occasions indicating a common stand in the truth (in the Lord) (Romans 16:8). The obedience of the five mentioned churches at Romans 15 had "*come abroad unto all men*" (see Romans 16:19). Brethren communicated regarding the faithfulness of each other and received the joyful news with gladness in their hearts regarding each other's faith (2 John 4, 3 John 4).