

II JOHN: The Elect Lady

“The elder unto the elect lady...”

II John 1:1

Introduction:

1. These two little epistles are not addressed often, but every word of God is pure (Pr 30:5; Luke 4:4).
2. If all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and profitable for many good things, then so is II John!
3. Many questioned the authenticity of this book, but we reject them and their ideas as profane babbling.
4. There is only one way to preach the Bible, we shall read it distinctly and give the sense (Neh 8:8).
5. Every woman must ask herself if she is worthy of such affection and concern by the beloved apostle.
6. Your pastor greatly desires that there will be many elect ladies to follow this holy and noble example.

EXPOSITION

A. The apostle John wrote a godly Christian mother on behalf of himself and saints (1:1).

1. The elder here is the apostle John, as indicated by the title and by the epistle’s character.
 - a. John was an apostle, the highest office in the church. But all respected men are elders.
 - b. Peter also called himself an elder, though he was also an apostle as well (I Pet 5:1-5).
 - c. John was likely an old man by this point, which also made him an elder (I Tim 5:1)!
2. The lady here is an elect and virtuous woman and mother for a variety of sound reasons.
 - a. Some speculate these two ladies are churches and their children are church members.
 - b. Though we are willing to see metaphors or spiritualize when there is compelling evidence to do so, there are no reasons in this epistle or in the Bible to do so here.
 - c. We take words in their commonly understood sense unless directed to do otherwise.
 - d. If we start interpretation by spiritualizing, what will stop us from total hallucination?
 - e. The Bible never calls a church a lady; the Bible never carries a metaphor this far.
 - f. Other than references to Babylon (Is 47:5,7), these are the only uses of “lady” (1:1,5).
 - g. When the Bible describes the church as a woman, it explains the metaphor clearly.
 - h. When a specific church is addressed in the New Testament, the church is identified.
 - i. Writing a specific female friend of John and others matches perfectly with III John.
 - j. The lack of specific names for the ladies is not without a precedent (II Cor 8:18-22).
 - k. Her name might have exposed her, her children, her sister, or her sister’s children to persecution; or her name might have diverted some of the focus from her character.
 - l. When John addressed the lady alone, he used singular English pronouns (1:4,5,13).
 - m. Nothing at all suggests against an elect lady, children, an elect sister, and cousins!
 - n. The language throughout the epistle fits best with an individual woman, not a church.
 - o. If we presume to spiritualize, we must continue it for every verse i.e. “house” (1:10).
 - p. Commentators see a mother i.e. Barnes, Clarke, Geneva, Gill, Henry, Poole, TSK.
3. John included her children in his salutation, which required plural pronouns (1:3,12; etc.).
4. John’s love for these friends was in the truth, not in truth as I John 3:18, but in the truth.
 - a. The truth of the gospel of Christ should be the basis for our best friends, the precious faith common among God’s elect (Ps 119:63; Gal 6:10; Titus 1:8; 3:15; II Pet 1:1).
 - b. All men, and ministers especially, should love other women *in the truth* (I Tim 5:1-2).
5. All the lovers of truth in their circle of acquaintances loved this family as well as John.

B. The uniting and love-producing factor among Christian saints is love of the truth (1:2).

1. It is the truth – the truth of Jehovah God and His Son Jesus Christ – that unites us in love!
2. The world says we can be friends as long as we do not discuss religion and politics. Nuts!

3. The truth here is the doctrine and gospel of wholesome words of the Lord Jesus Christ!
 4. We are bound together by our faith in God, His Son Jesus Christ, the words of God, the hope of heaven, the vanity of the world, the rules for godly living, forgiveness, etc.
 5. It is the understanding that we have heard with our ears and that was taught to our hearts.
 6. The truth dwelleth in us, in our new man that loves it, where God taught us and gave us an understanding (John 6:45; Col 3:16; II Tim 2:25-26; Heb 8:11; I John 2:14; 5:20).
 7. We will forever rejoice in the truth, which will be our bond around the throne of God.
- C. John uses the common salutation to greet and bless his elect friend and children (1:3).**
1. Grace, mercy, and peace are what we all need and should desire from God and Christ.
 2. He further identified Jesus Christ as the Son of the Father against the heretics (1:7-11).
 3. John sought God's grace, mercy, and peace to be upon this family in truth and love.
 4. He will take up truth in the following verse (1:4) and love in the one following it (1:5).
- D. John rejoiced greatly to learn that his dear friend's children were of the truth (1:4).**
1. John had learned that some – “of thy children” – of the lady's children were godly saints.
 2. Walking in truth is not talking about truth, talking for the truth, or talking with truth; it is living the truth consistently and openly in the character of a man taught by God.
 3. It should be a great desire and source of joy to find others walking in the truth (Rom 1:8).
 4. It should be a special source of joy to find of children walking in the truth (Prov 27:11).
 5. Teaching truth to children is key (Deut 6:4-7; Ps 78:1-8; Is 38:19; Joel 1:1-3; Eph 6:4).
 6. God seeks worshippers that will worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24; I John 4:6).
- E. John used this short epistle to remind his elect lady friend to love of the brethren (1:5).**
1. He begged her toward spiritual perfection to increase in brotherly love (I Thess 4:9-10).
 2. The language and content is surely John's about brother love (John 13:34; I John 2:7-11).
 3. He must be pressing this noble woman to the use of her assets and gifts in serving others.
 4. It is impossible to say too much of this greatest grace of Christianity (I Cor 12:31; 13:13).
 5. Love is not a new commandment, for Moses taught it, and God taught it to our hearts.
 6. Love is a new commandment, because Jesus Christ taught it more plainly and by His life.
- F. True brotherly love of the Christian religion is keeping God's commandments (1:6).**
1. You love God and others when you keep God's commandments (John 14:15; I Jn 5:1-3).
 2. Love is a foundation principle of Jesus Christ's religion (Rom 13:8-9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8).
 3. If you are delighting in God's commandments and obeying them, you love God and man.
- G. There were then many false teachers that denied the true coming of the Messiah (1:7).**
1. The primary doctrinal fact of the gospel is Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Son of God.
 2. Satan has, and will, attempt to confuse either the humanity or divinity of Jesus Christ.
 3. Remember that it was John that wrote a unique gospel defending Jesus Christ's deity.
 4. There was false teaching that Jesus of Nazareth was not fully human flesh, but only spirit.
 - a. Observe the language – Jesus Christ, admitting Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, did not come in the flesh; He was not fully and truly the incarnate God, but just a spirit.
 - b. However, John opened his first epistle with careful words to the contrary (I John 1:1).
 5. Remember, in order to be a deceiver, you must teach heresy while claiming Christianity.
 6. Remember, if you deny the truth about Jesus Christ, then you are obviously antichrist.
 7. There are not a few of these false teachers (II Cor 2:17; II Tim 3:13; 4:3-4; II Pet 2:1-2).
 8. There are many ways in which we can confuse and deny the true sonship of Jesus Christ.
 - a. We may, like the Jews, deny that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - b. We may, like the Catholics, teach some pagan concept of an eternal begetting of God.
 - c. We may, like the Mormons, confuse Adam, Michael, Satan, and Jesus as the same?!

- H. The great danger from deceivers is that we be seduced away from our great goal (1:8).**
1. It requires careful, personal diligence and vigilance to avoid lying deceptions of men.
 2. Our first and great goal is to keep ourselves from losing any of our progress in the gospel.
 3. Jude exhorted men in light of heretics to build themselves up in the faith (Jude 1:20-21).
 4. Paul fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith (II Tim 4:6-7). We must!
- I. A great evidence of God's presence and eternal life is the correctness of doctrine (1:9).**
1. The Father and Son are closely related, so you cannot have just one (Matthew 11:25-27).
 2. If you corrupt the doctrine of Jesus Christ, then you corrupt the doctrine of God as well.
 3. We do not stress the incarnate sonship of Jesus Christ as a hobbyhorse, but as the truth!
- J. This family was told not to entertain false teachers or deceivers in their home (1:10).**
1. If the book is written to a church, as some guess, then the "house" here is God's house.
 2. Women are vulnerable to deception, so they must be firm and resolute against heretics and their heresies (Gen 3:1-6; I Cor 14:34-35; I Tim 2:11-14; II Tim 3:6-7; I Pet 3:7).
 3. John's language here is milder than Paul's, but it carries the same point (Galatians 1:6-9).
- K. Hospitality or blessings for heretics makes a person an accomplice to heresy (1:11).**
1. We have no liberty or room from God to associate with heretics privately or corporately.
 2. Jehoshaphat took some liberty to associate with Ahab to his shame (II Chr 18:1; 19:1-2).
- L. This epistle was a note from John to this lady; he hoped to come and speak more (1:12).**
1. Personal interaction of face-to-face meetings is the best way for fullness of joy.
 2. John had many more things to say to her, but we safely assume here are the big ones.
- M. John relayed greetings from this lady's sister's children (nephews) back to her (1:13).**
1. The use of the singular pronouns, "thy" and "thee," indicate he addressed the lady only.
 2. The elect sister's children may have never met their cousins, so the singular address.

APPLICATION

- A. Women can have respected roles in the truth (1:1; Luk 2:36-38; Acts 16:14-15; Rom 16:1-2).
- B. A reputation is by choosing to live a godly and gracious life (1:1; Pr 11:16; 22:1; Luke 2:52).
- C. It is a godly trait of ministers to love good men *and women* (1:1; II Timothy 1:5; Titus 1:8).
- D. Love and friendship are the best when based in truth (1:2; Ps 119:63; Gal 6:10; Tit 1:8; 3:15).
- E. Optimal marriage matches a Gaius and an elect lady in the truth (1:2; Prov 31:30; I Cor 9:5).
- F. A mother's high goal is children walking in truth (1:4; I Sam 1:28; Pr 1:8; 6:20; II Tim 3:15).
- G. Even the elect lady did not have all children walking in truth (1:4; Romans 9:13; Gal 4:22).
- H. Walking in truth is not hearing, believing, or speaking it (1:4; Jas 1:21-25; 2:14-26; I Jn 2:4).
- I. Walking in love is graciously serving others in charity (1:5-6; I Cor 13:4-7; Hebrews 6:10).
- J. Love is not mere feelings, but keeping His commandments (1:6; Rom 13:8-9; I John 5:1-3).
- K. There are many false teachers; do not assume all are honest and sincere (1:7; II Tim 4:3-4).
- L. Diligence and vigilance are crucial to not backslide and to gain the prize (1:8; Phil 3:12-14).
- M. Doctrine is very important, especially doctrine pertaining to Jesus Christ (1:9; Gal 1:6-9).
- N. Reject all other standards and measure men by their doctrine of Christ (1:9; Rom 16:17-18).
- O. Women must avoid company or fellowship with heretics (1:10; I Tim 2:14; II Tim 3:6-7).
- P. Wishing heretics well or blessing them is wrong in God's sight (1:11; II Chr 18:1; 19:1-2).
- Q. Separation is a doctrine of God and totally required to please Him (1:10-11; II Thess 3:6).
- R. Unity and peace are nothing, if gospel purity is betrayed (1:10-11; II Cor 6:14-17; Jas 3:17).
- S. Face-to-face meetings are better than phone or email for promoting full joy (1:12).

Conclusion:

1. Every girl and woman taught by the Holy Spirit must ask if they would be worthy of such affection.
2. The saints of God have been called out of this world, yet they have a glorious bond with one another.
3. Heretics, especially those corrupting the doctrine of Christ, are to be rejected without mercy.