

JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT FOR A GODLY LADY

2 JOHN

There is a mystery that captures us right from the beginning of this book. 1 John 1, says, “The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth;”

Even just having a mild background in the New Testament would be enough to cause you to tilt your head to the side, squint your eyes a little bit, and think deeply about what you’ve just read. Two immediate questions come to mind right away, “Who is the elder?” and “Who is the elect lady?”

You may get different opinions here (and in the case of this letter, it is completely safe), but it appears that this is the only letter in the New Testament addressed to a woman. We find letters to entire congregations. We find letters to individual men. But here is a gem that is set apart from all of that as John sits down to answer some questions for this young lady, who is possibly a widow.

The opposing view to this letter being addressed to a woman is some believe this letter was addressed to a church. The comment is that John is the ‘elder’ (and there is no dispute about that), but that this elect lady is a particular church, and that her children would make up the membership of that church.

However, it has been said that common sense is what makes the best sense, and it would seem best interpreted to see this ‘elect lady’ as a sweet Christian lady who had a few children and a few questions that made their way to this old apostle.

How to Think About 2 John

This little memo has a lot to say, especially to parents if you follow the outline of the book closely. What you’ll notice is that the first portion of the letter has to do with truth and love, and the second half has to do with perversion and destruction.

Truth and Love Work Together—

The Joy of Walking in Truth (Vs.1-4): John says that he has no greater joy than to see his children walk in the truth, and what a statement! When God allows us to have a hand in someone’s life, especially our children, and we see them grow and mature in God’s truth in such a way that they can apply Biblical understanding to their lives, well, you’ve reached the tippy top of joy that you can experience in this life.

The Journey of Walking in Love (Vs. 5-6): Truth, though, has a natural counterpart. In Scripture, many times, you'll find that truth and love go together, and that is exactly the case here. John reminds this young lady, that he isn't telling her anything new, but just repeating the age-old message of God— that He requires love from the lives of those who would serve Him.

Error and Deception Work Destruction—

Recognizing False Teachers (Vs. 7-9): John says here that many false teachers have entered into the world armed with a message that is absolutely, eternally fatal. He said there are deceivers who make it a point not to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. You can recognize a false teacher by how they view Jesus.

Running From False Teachers (Vs. 10-13): John goes so far as to say that if you encounter an opportunity to host a known false teacher... don't! Verse 10, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:" When it comes to false teachers, John says there is a surefire way to not be exposed to their lies on their terms— run away!

What to Look for in 2 John

Key Words—

Truth: In the few verses that make up this little memo, you will read this word, or some variation of it five different times. When you're reading this little book, look for the word truth, look for the word doctrine, and look for the word commandment. These words all have to do with God's unchanging Word. What we're learning here is that John is reminding us that there is a standard to live by. The Bible is the truth, and the truth is the standard by which everything else is judged. That's how we're able to read into different situations. It is with God's truth that we can determine if our emotions are correct. Everything we encounter can be filtered by God's truth.

Love: When truth is obeyed, this is when our love is proved. You will read this word a total of four times as you move through this letter.

What to Gain from 2 John

The Blessing of Truth: It's always so refreshing to know the truth. The national newspaper "The Washington Post" has a slogan for their mission. That slogan is "Democracy Dies in the Dark." Now, while we would not agree with this publication as a whole, what are they trying to say here? They're trying to say that the truth matters, and to this, we would certainly agree as Christians. The truth does matter— even more than a news organization realizes. Maybe we would do well to just sit and think for a moment at all of the blessings that truth brings, and all of the situations we've been saved from all because we were blessed with knowing God's truth. Go ahead. Try it now.

The Danger of Error: It may seem harsh at first to cut off meaningful contact with those who teach a different message, and it may even seem over the top to suggest that you shouldn't even speak any of God's blessings over their life. It's certainly not the 'modern' thing to do. But we need to understand the seriousness of someone being led astray by a teaching that is anything less than the Gospel. What happens to someone who does not believe the Gospel? In Hell? Look at the target location of those carrying a false message— the home! Take a close look at these last few letters that mention these ministers of Satan and you'll notice that his favorite places to send his agents are first to the church, and second to the home. And John says to deal with them wisely by not dealing with them at all(not on their terms anyway).



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