



A Study/Lesson from 2nd John

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*The writings from John (1st, 2nd, and 3rd John) sometime called the Epistles or Letters of John, are like trail mix -- concentrated, chewy, and nutritious...or the writings have a twist like the M&M's marketing tagline... "Melts in your mouth, not in your hand." **John's words placed on a piece of papyrus material (normally a 10" x 8" flat piece stretched and pressed sheet) were seasoned with the same God anointed idea that those words to his readers would find them "Melting into their hearts and not just in their heads."** In every book of the Bible and in every word of those God approved books, fresh anointing would be revealed to the readers. God's Word has always been a truth that would soak down into the spirit of the individual whose heart and soul was open to the Spirit-anointed words coming from the heart of God.*

When John writes these letters, he is an elderly man. When he was young, he was Jesus' "beloved disciple." Now when he is old, he is passing on the faith he learned at Jesus' feet.

John, the apostle, has lived in Ephesus for many years now, teaching and preaching in the churches around that great provincial capital. In 1st John he writes with great affection. Sprinkled through the letter are references to his "little children" and to his "beloved" friends in Christ.

That doesn't mean he is soft with his beliefs for effective Christian Discipline.

In 1st John he:

- **Refutes** the enemies of Christ who had infiltrated the church and spread false and dangerous doctrine,
- **Challenges** believers to reject darkness and live in the light,
- **Calls for** righteous living at the same time as he assures them of the forgiveness of God, and
- **Underscores** love as the greatest and highest commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All the letters from John spoke the Truth.

Shortness of the two letters (2 John—3 John) speaks of the genuineness of the letters.

The length of the letters would take up the whole page of a piece of papyrus ...probably no more.

Of course, the best guarantee in our heart that these were genuine letters from John is our faith in believing that this is the whole Word of God...inspired and put together by men and authorized by God.

These were men who might not have known the plans of God to make the Word a love letter to His creation.

God's plans are far greater than men can comprehend.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.....so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it..." (Isaiah 55:8, 9; 11)

Each letter (2 and 3 John) comes from "the elder."

"Elder" here assumes that he has the right to speak and that his word will carry weight in congregations where he is not actually present.

He speaks as one whose authority goes out to the Church at large.

The word is "presbuteros," which originally meant *an elder*, not in the official sense (within the local church body) but in the natural sense of the term. We would be better to translate it as *the ancient*, *the aged*, or the *one with the experience*, for it is not from a position in the Church that the writer of the letter draws his authority, but from:

- ✓ *His age*
- ✓ *His personal qualities and wisdom.*

Therefore....from all indications both of these letters were written by John, the disciple whom Jesus loved and in whom Jesus trusted His mother to.

He was now undoubtedly an old man....who had authority of a bishop in Ephesus and in the places around it. When he saw that a church was threatened with trouble and heresy, he wrote with gracious and loving correction to his people.

Here are the letters of one of the last of the first generation of Christians, a man whom all loved and respected.

We know that the letters came from the same hand (thought and mindset).

2 John begins, 'The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.'

3 John begins, 'The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.'

Notice other similarities:

- ✓ 2 John 4, "I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth."
- ✓ 3 John 4, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth."
- ✓ 2 John closes with, "Although I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink; instead, I hope to come to you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete" (verse 12)
- ✓ 3 John closes with, "I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink; instead, I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face (verses 13-14)

2 and 3 John are clearly connected to 1 John in that they are dealing with the same situation, the same dangers and the same people. Read 1 John 4:3 and 2 John 7.

The “elect lady” was the church...not an individual. Referring to the Bride of Christ.

(I would hope that all brides are female gender...God sure thinks so and so should be our thinking).

The main problem with the church and the problem John is addressing has to do with teachers of the truth and false teachers (who are trying to persuade with words that Jesus did not come in the flesh....and did not really die like we would die)...denying the incarnation of Jesus. There are religions today believing the same thing...even worse.

In the earliest day of the Church, there were three different kinds of ministries:

1. **Apostles**—*those who had been in the company of Jesus and who had been witnesses of the resurrection. They were the undisputed leaders of the Church. Their commission ran throughout the whole Church; in any country and in any congregation, their ministry was supreme.*
2. **Prophets**—*they were not attached to any one congregation. Wandering preachers, going where the Spirit moved them and giving to others the message which the Spirit of God gave to them. They had given up their home and occupation....and the comfort and the security of a settled life to be the wandering messengers of God. They, too, had a special place in the Church. The prophets were not to be brought under the same rules and regulations which governed ordinary people. Their authority was not confined to any one congregation and who had right of entry to every congregation.*
3. **Elders**—*during their first missionary journey, part of the work of Paul and Barnabas was to ordain elders in all the local churches which they founded (Acts 14:23). The elders were the officials of the settled community; their work was within their congregation, and they did not move outside it. It is clear that they were the backbone of the organization of the early Church. They taught and preached to the congregations week after week...ministered to people on a daily basis....*

**The problem was not with the apostles ...or the elders.
Some of the prophets were the problem.**

There were false prophets and false teachers that were making their way through the congregations...giving the impression that they had revelations from the Spirit...where it truly was from another spirit (their own). When we use our interpretations over the Scripture, we are guided by another spirit...“demonic intervention.”

Do you think we have some “so called” prophets making their way around the congregations and teaching some false doctrine today?

Or maybe even speaking the Word but having selfish or ungodly motives behind it all?

In the letters, John warns his people that the wrong kind of wandering prophets might come claiming knowledge and wisdom of God...seeking money and hospitality.

John was entirely justified in warning his people and saying that they must on no account receive these imposters and vultures.

There is no doubt that, in the early Church, these wandering prophets became a problem. Some of them were teaching heresy, even if they were sincerely convinced of their own teaching. Some were simply plausible rogues who had found an easy way to make a comfortable living. That is the picture which lies behind 2 John.

2 John 1-3, “¹ The elder, to the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth—² because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: ³ Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son, will be with us in truth and love.”

In this passage, love and truth are inseparably connected.

It is in the truth that the elder loves the elect lady. It is because of the truth that he loves and writes to the church.

It is the agape love...

Agape love:

- ✓ ***Is not passion with its ebb and flow, its flicker and flame. It is not an easy-going sentimentalism...***
- ✓ ***It is an undefeatable goodwill...it is the attitude towards others which, no matter what they do, will seek their highest good and will accept all the difficulties, all the problems and all the toil which that search involves.***
- ✓ ***It is not easy to acquire or a light thing to put into practice.***

It is of great significance that John writes in love to warn.

Note:

John begins his warning with grace....mercy....and peace.

He wants them to receive the letter with grace....show mercy as Jesus would show mercy...and heed the warning seeking peace with the brothers. He was blunt, but caring. Warned with gentleness...but direct...And,

He was specific in getting them to understand that God is the Father...and Jesus is the Son.

Jesus warned of the wolves in sheep’s clothing...of those whose hearts were out to deceive.

“Ye believe in God, believe in me. I and my Father are One. How the Father thinks, I think!”