

## 63– 2 John: Love, Hold Onto, and Live the Truth

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- John does not use his name here, but refers to himself as **“the elder.”** This can either be an official title as someone with responsibility in the Church, or more likely as one who is senior, an elder statesman so to speak. He was the last surviving original disciple of Jesus.
- This is a very short letter, likely a follow-up or addendum to one already written, or as John states, he had more to say, but did not want to do so in writing and hoped to come to see these people in person. The style is in keeping with his other letters. Time of writing is probably close to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- **“To the elect lady and her children.”** This brief address has caused a great deal of speculation. Just exactly who is this person, or these people? Many have offered various identities, but most commentators believe that it is not just one particular person, but **an entire church body, a sister church** apparently to the one John wrote from (*see final verse*). Others see her as some influential Christian woman at that time. However, there is one very interesting thought that emerges here. John calls this person “the elect lady” and says he loves her in truth, and not just him but all those who have known the truth. Who is Truth? It would seem that a very good thought regarding this lady’s identity is that she is the mother of Jesus, Mary. Jesus left his mother in the care of John, not any of his half brothers or others. John knew and loved Mary and most likely cared for her after Jesus returned to heaven. Believers at that time would have been very familiar with her. She was in the upper room at Pentecost (Feast of Weeks, Acts 2) with 120 other believers, so she apparently was active with the new church then. The only difficulty with this, however, is that we believe John wrote this very late in his life, perhaps as old as 80-90 years. John was probably the youngest of the disciples, and Mary would have most likely been at least 20-30 years older than John. It would seem unlikely she would still be alive at this writing, but we don’t know any of this, including exactly when this letter was written. If Mary were not alive at this time, John still could have been addressing Mary as perhaps a beloved church leader, the mother of the Truth, whose “children” are those in the faith. Whoever the “elect lady and her children” are, this letter is obviously addressed to sincere believers.
- The **main concern in this short letter is once again apostate teachers and distortions of the truth of the Gospel message.** The Church then met in individual homes, and the concern here is that those assembling together not allow these false teachers and teachings into those meeting places. Our homes then, and now, must be true to Jesus. He doesn’t want them deceived. The test is whether or not they believe and teach that Jesus came in the flesh, that He was God incarnate. They should not offer any kind of hospitality to these people. It could be thought to be an endorsement of false teaching.
- Having the truth also means not just **knowing the reality of Jesus**, the Truth, but living the truth, which is rooted in love. That is love for God and love for one another. This is also the focus of John’s first letter. Loving one another also means protecting fellow believers from the lies and errors of false teachers. It means having a tight-knit community that loves each other and loves the truth, and also loves and lives the commandments of God.
- It is likely that John was concerned about the **growing popularity of Gnosticism**, which taught that Jesus (God) did not come in the flesh (*they taught Jesus was natural born man, not God in the flesh*). If you deny this, you can deny just about everything else about Him, about the Truth. Soon, the pure truth has been distorted. It is critical to know the truth, love the truth, obey the truth and live the truth. In the early days of the new Church, just like today, apostasy was a great danger to their faith, especially if it was not rooted in love for the Truth – love for the man Jesus, and the God He is. Our belief in these truths must be unwavering and sure. This is abiding in the truth.



## Highlights

<b>Salutation (1-3)</b>	Heavy emphasis on the word “truth” used four times here. Opposes the “untruths” of false teachings
<b>Love one another (4-5)</b>	John rejoices that these people are walking in the truth, as God commands. He pleads with them to continue loving each other, not a new commandment but one heard from the beginning. The focus is on love, and living that love.
<b>Hold on to the truth – don’t give false teachers access (6-11)</b>	Concern about false teachers that do not believe Jesus actually came in the flesh. Calls these “antichrists.” Encourages them not to lose that truth. If you abide in these truths, you have Jesus and the Father. If not, you don’t have the truth. Don’t allow these people into your fellowship, otherwise you would share in their evil.
<b>More to say, hope to come soon (12)</b>	Doesn’t want to write more, but hopes to come in person, so they may share in the fullness of joy.
<b>Final Greeting (13)</b>	Greetings from “the children of your elect sister” (could be Mary’s sisters, or figurative sisters in the Lord, or a sister church)

- As usual, John begins by **confirming and affirming the deity of Jesus the Messiah**. He relates Jesus to God the Father, giving them equality.
- The word **“truth” is a major theme in this book**. John uses it nine times, four times just in the salutation. The word “truth” actually means “reality” as opposed to things that are man-made fables. Knowing the truth, then, is more than merely agreeing with doctrine. It is applying it to everything in our lives.
- The other dominant word here is “commandment” which John uses to emphasize the strength of his message and our position as believers. There are three things that the believer must have, that must blend together as part of our lives: truth, love and obedience. These can act as a shield against error and false teaching.
- *“<sup>6</sup> This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it. <sup>7</sup> For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. <sup>8</sup> Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. <sup>9</sup> Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup> If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; <sup>11</sup> for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”* (6-11) This is the **main teaching of this letter**. If you love God, you obey Him. There are false teachers in the world who do not know the Truth, and would deceive us. They are antichrists. Don’t lose the Truth, because without it, you do not have God. Don’t support or show hospitality to those who deny the Truth, or you share in their evil. The Truth is the most critical element of our lives. And what exactly is the Truth? His name is Jesus.
- There is a **danger to all mankind about adding or subtracting from the truth**. The Word of God is perfect, but man always seems to want to take something away (*like the blood atonement that many avoid*) or add to it (*like working your way to heaven, or making a perfect world, which is impossible for us!*). We like to change God’s world to be “progressive” and adapt it to our times and sinful culture. It cannot be done. Truth is truth. God says He never changes, and neither does His Word.

The entire point of this short letter is very powerful:  
**Know the Truth, Love the Truth, Obey the Truth, Live the Truth,**  
**Don’t depart from the Truth, and Love one another in the Truth.**  
 Just as important today as it was 2,000 years ago.