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**BIBLE STUDY**

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**THE ELECT LADY AND HER CHILDREN**

**II John**

We will begin this lesson by looking into the person this letter was written to. We know that John, the apostle, was the author of this letter. There are three different opinions who this letter was written to. Some believe this letter was written to a lady in John's time. Some believe this is written to a lady in our time. There are others that believe this was written to the church. They may all be right. Scriptures are many faceted. The message is the important thing more than who it was written to.

***I John 1:1 "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;"***

The elder, in the verse above, is John the Apostle, not John the Baptist. The letters of 2nd and 3rd John are like brief postcards that John sent to believers until he was able to personally visit with them again. He addresses his letter to the elect lady and her children. The elect lady {whoever she is} is someone or group that believes in the Lord. The word "elect" tells us that.

***Colossians 3:12 “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;”***

Notice, the children are not spoken of as elect. It, perhaps, was like Noah and his sons. Noah pleased God, but the blessing came through Noah to his sons. It appears that John knew this lady and her family personally. He even speaks of loving them. This seems to be a woman who had Christian influence, because it speaks of others loving her, who loved the Lord. John also could be using the term “elect lady” metaphorically, not writing to a woman (individual) but to a church (group). New Testament writers speak of the church using female terminology because the church is “the bride” of Christ (Revelation 22:17; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-33). Thus, John possibly is writing to a congregation and its members, “her children.” John says this church is one whom he loves in the truth. Here two great biblical realities are combined: love and truth. They must be tied together because they balance each other and really cannot be separated. Truth without love is cold orthodoxy; love without truth is empty sentimentalism. Love is truth in action.

***II John 1:2 "For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever."***

We know that "truth" in the verse above, is speaking of Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jesus does dwell within the believer, and He will never leave us, or forsake us. He is with us even unto the end. Truth is incredibly important to John. He mentions it five times in the first four verses. Though truth has fallen on hard times today, it is non-negotiable for the Christian. Many people say that truth is relative, but one plus one still equals two. Truth is that which corresponds to reality, and it finds its roots in God. He is the absolute standard against which truth is measured. In fact, truth is what God says about a matter. The revealed Word of God speaks truth about life and death, heaven and hell, money and parenting, marriage and sex, and every other topic relevant to life’s big questions. Therefore, we don’t have to wallow in a sea of relativity. On the contrary, we must stand for truth.

***II John 1:3 "Grace be with you, mercy, [and] peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."***

John was known as the apostle of love. Love is the theme in all of his writings. John is speaking a blessing from the Father and the Lord Jesus on this lady and her family. She was undoubtedly of great value to the church, even though her name is not mentioned. Stephen was not very well known in the Bible but was one of the first martyrs. It is not necessary for someone to be named in the Bible to be of great value to God and the church. Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ. These blessings are available nowhere else. But note that they only come in concert with the truth and love.

***Ephesians 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:”***

***II John 1:4 "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father."***

Notice that this family was not a Christian in name only but were walking the Christian life every day. The fact that they were living their Christianity greatly pleased John. Probably, this was a family whom John had influenced. We are all commanded of God to live upright lives. In fact, if we love Him, we will keep His commandments. To experience more of God’s grace, mercy, and peace, believers must be walking in truth. Seeing this behavior in Christians is what made John glad.

***II John 1:5 "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another."***

It seems each minister has a message that is uppermost. John was no exception. He based love very high on the list. First John has a great deal to say about the commandment of God to love Him and our fellow man. It is not new for John to bring up the subject of love. God never gives you his blessings when you contaminate his truth. We “walk in the truth”, that is live in accordance with God’s Word by keeping the Father’s commands. And the chief command, after loving God, is that we love one another.

***II John 1:6 "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."***

What does God call us to do with our lives? Walk in love. One way of expressing this is, that we must walk in the salvation the Lord has provided for us. Jesus said; If you love me, you will keep my commandments. The commandments He was speaking of were in the next Scriptures.

***Matthew 22:37-40***

***37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."***

***38 "This is the first and great commandment."***

***39 "And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."***

***40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."***

If we were to sum up these two commandments in just one word, it would be love. Walk in love to God and man. The church is to be an incubator for the truth. We do not gather together to have our ears tickled but to preserve, hear, and speak the truth. The church is the family of God, and our heavenly Father has given his family a set of standards. As the family expands, there will be problems. The test of a true church is not whether or not it has problems, but whether or not it addresses those problems with God’s standard of truth. Yet, all things must be done with love. We can’t be “walking in the truth” if we don’t “walk in love”. We love others when we compassionately, righteously, and responsibly seek their well-being that which God desires for them.

***II John 1:7 "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."***

These deceivers are probably leaders with a false doctrine who are trying to lead others astray. A "deceiver" would be pretending to be a Christian, when in reality he is opposed to God. Anyone who does not believe Jesus to be Messiah, and in fact, believes that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, is of the spirit of the antichrist. They are opposed to the truth of Christ. One of the reasons that Christians need to know the truth is because many deceivers have gone out into the world. John is warning his readers about “deceivers” who dupe people into believing what is not true. But John isn’t concerned about someone claiming to pull a rabbit out of a hat. He’s concerned about those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Truth is measured by what people conclude about Jesus Christ. He is in a class by himself. It doesn’t matter how eloquently a person speaks or what social causes he advocates. If he suggests Jesus is anything less than the eternal Son of God who became a sinless man, died to atone for sins, and rose from the dead, he is the deceiver and the antichrist. As John has said previously in 1 John, the Antichrist is coming and will appear during the great tribulation (Daniel 9:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; Revelation 11:2; 13:1-8), but little antichrists are active now (1 John 2:18). The category of antichrist applies to those who oppose and replace Christ. They were active in John’s day, and they’re active today.

***II John 1:8 "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."***

God has rewards in store for his followers. He is saying, be careful to stay with the true gospel you learned from the beginning. The main message is to gird up the loins of the mind, and do not listen and believe a false message. The danger would be in falling away from God. Though you may receive some blessings on earth, no one obtains their full reward in history. Most is reserved for our heavenly eternity. But if you are unfaithful and allow yourself to be tricked regarding the truth, you can lose what God has in store and not receive your full reward.

***II John 1:9 "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."***

This is saying, to have the truth and lose it would be very bad. This means that we must guard the Truth. We must continually dwell in the Truth of Christ. We must not let our salvation slip away believing a lie. He that endures until the end shall be saved. We must guard the gospel message, as it was first given to us. Remain saved, after you get saved. What prevents this? Intimacy with God. You must remain in Christ’s teaching. The word “remain” can also be translated “stay” or “abide”; the idea is to “be in close proximity.” You can’t be close to Christ without being close to his teaching. Intimacy with God requires remaining or abiding in his Word.

***II John 1:10 "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into [your] house, neither bid him God speed:"***

***II John 1:11 "For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."***

Our mind is like a computer. The things we hear are recorded in our brain. We should not listen to a false message at all. If you invite these people in, you will remember some of the things they say. The best policy is do not let them in your house. To wish them God speed would be blessing them and their false message. Just get rid of them is the best policy. Do it with Christian compassion but get rid of them. To wish them God speed would be saying, you approved of their

message. You could see that would be an error. Importantly, in the early church, believers didn’t have church buildings but often met in each other’s homes. Thus, John warns the church to give no hearing or exposure to deceivers who do not hold to the truth of Christ. This doesn’t mean you can’t talk to unbelievers and try to evangelize them. Rather, it means the church must not give an audience to those who are contentious or repeatedly deny Christ.

***Titus 3:8-11***

***8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.***

***9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.***

***10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;***

***11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.***

***II John 1:12 "Having many things to write unto you, I would not [write] with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full."***

***II John 1:13 "The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen."***

This is saying that John will not write any more but will come to see her when he can. Though it was urgent that John write to these Christians with both warning and encouragement, he knew it was far better to visit them in person. This lady is someone John enjoyed being around. Perhaps, she and her family had been part of John's spiritual family. The greeting from a “elect sister” near unto John to this lady the letter was written to, speaks of her children. This tells us that both the lady who the greeting is from, and the lady the letter was addressed to, had children. Many married women led their families to the knowledge of God. The most effective form of ministry the kind that brings the most joy is that done face to face. The apostle concludes with warm greetings from a sister church. These women were true “Apostolic Church Mothers” who embraced their God ordained ministry to the body of Christ.

***1 Timothy 2:9-15***

***9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;***

***10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.***

***11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.***

***12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.***

***13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.***

***14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.***

***15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.***

**QUESTIONS**

1. Who are the three possibilities this letter could have been written to?
2. Who is the elder in verse 1?
3. How was the person addressed that the letter was written to?
4. Were her children spoken of as elect?
5. Who does John say loves this lady?
6. What does the word "elect" tell us?
7. What is the "truth" speaking of in verse 2?
8. What was the blessing John spoke on the lady?
9. John was known as the apostle of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. What is the theme in all of John's writings?
11. What explanation is given of the Lord Jesus Christ in verse 3?
12. What condition had John found her children in?
13. If we love Him, we will keep His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
14. What was the commandment, from the beginning?
15. Verse 6 says, what is love?
16. Who are those that confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?
17. What warning did he give them in verse 8?
18. We must \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the doctrine of Christ.
19. What harsh instruction are we given regarding listening to false doctrines, in verse 10.
20. If you wish the evil one God speed, what have you done?
21. What does the word "children" tell us about the elect lady?