

## Second John

### Introduction:

There is nothing in the book itself to identify a time of writing. It is so closely tied in thought and circumstances to the previous epistle and the next one that also bears his name that it is universally ascribed to John and it is clear that it too was written to defend the church against those who “*confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh.... the deceiver and the antichrist.*” There has been a great deal of speculation on who the recipient might have been. Wescott has compiled a comprehensive list of them.

The rendering of the phrase is beset by the greatest difficulties. No interpretation can be accepted as satisfactory. The difficulty seems to have been felt from a very early time. Two distinct views have found support, that the title describes a person and that it describes a society. The first view has been held in several different forms. The Latin Fragments of the Hypotyposes of Clement of Alexandria represent the letter as written to a ‘certain Babylonian (compare 1 Peter 5:13) Electa by name’...‘it signifies however’ Clement adds, ‘the election of the holy church.’ others again (so the [late] Syrian version) have regarded *kuria* as a proper name (‘to the elect Kyria’). Such a name is found... but if *Kuria* were so used here it is in the highest degree unlikely that St John would have written *eklekte kuria* and not *kuria te eklekte* as in v 13; 3Jn 1; Rom 16:13. It has also been supposed that the two words form a compound proper name (‘to Electa Kyria’). This view removes the difficulty of the construction; but the combination is at the least very strange. On the other hand it is not easy to suppose that the letter was addressed to an unnamed person, a single Christian ‘lady’ (‘To an elect lady,’ so Vulgate) though this is a most natural rendering of the text (comp 1Pet 1:1) All these notions of a personal address moreover are unsupported by such allusions in the letter as might be expected to mark an individual relationship. Feeling these difficulties many from the time of Jerome... have taken the title, the ‘elect lady,’ to be applied to some particular Christian society... or even to the whole Church” ‘to her who is a chosen Lady, a Bride of Him who is the Lord.’ But of such a use of *kuria* no example is quoted. On the whole it is best to recognize that the problem of the address is insoluble with our present knowledge. It is not unlikely that it contains some allusion, intelligible under the original circumstances, to which we have lost the key. But the general tenor of the letter favors the opinion that it was sent to a community and not to one believer.

Whether to one Christian lady named Kyria along with her children, or to the elect church and her members, the letter is a strong warning. A warning to hold to the truth and to shun the presence of those who are teaching error.

### 1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children,

John begins the letter by identifying himself as “*the elder.*” Since this word is never used in such a way to describe the eldership in the church (they are always in the plural), John is not identifying himself as Peter did.

*The **elders** among you I exhort, who am a **fellow-elder**, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 1 Pet 5:1*

There is no example in the Scriptures of the term “*elder*” being applied to a single individual. Each church had a plurality of elders and none called themselves “the elder.”

*sending it to the **elders** by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:30*  
*And when they had appointed for them **elders** in every church, Acts 14:23*  
*go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and **elders** about this question. Acts 15:2*  
*And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the **elders** of the church. Acts 20:17*  
*And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the **elders** were present. Acts 21:18*  
*were wanting, and appoint **elders** in every city, as I gave thee charge; Titus 1:5*

There is no other use of the term “the elder” anywhere else in the NT. Though some have used this to establish the idea of the office of a single elder who has special authority there is no such use of it in the NT. It seems more natural to understand it in a similar way to what Paul said about himself.

yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: Philemon 1:9

In this case John is simply describing his age not an office. John was getting old, and simply used this designation to identify himself.

See the introduction for the question of whether the elect lady and her children is an individual family or a church.

But regardless of who this individual or congregation might be, John identifies them as “elect.” This is one of the more important doctrinal concepts in the NT. A careful look at the definition reveals that its primary meaning is “picked out, chosen” and its secondary meaning is “choice, select” and “excellent, preeminent.”

“eklektos... picked out, chosen... 1. chosen by God... hence Christians are called... the chosen or elect of God... 2. Univ. choice, select, choice, select, i.e. the best of its kind or class, excellent, preeminent...” (Thayer, p 197; 1588)

As we look at the Scriptures we see how important this being “picked out” and “chosen” actually is. These are those precious and special people that God foresaw from eternity. From all that are called out, these are the chosen and elect ones. The elect race that are the elect of God.

For many are called, but few **chosen**. Mt 22:14

And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his **elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Mt 24:31

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's **elect**? It is God that justifieth; Rom 8:33  
brethren, give diligence to make your calling and **election** sure: 2Pet. 1:10

But ye are a **elect** race 1 Pet 2:9

John is therefore writing this epistle (whether to a local church, an individual and her family) that is made of up those who are truly God's special chosen and elect people.

### **whom I love in truth;**

Truth is one of the key words in the first four passages.

The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in **truth**; and not I only, but also all they that know the **truth**; 2 for the **truth's** sake which abideth in us, and it shall be with us for ever: 3 Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in **truth** and love. 4 I rejoice greatly that I have found (certain) of thy children walking in **truth**, even as we received commandment from the Father. || Jn 1:1-4

It was Pilate who asked the question but never waited for the answer: “what is truth?” Jesus had long before answered this question.

Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, (then) are ye truly my disciples; 32 and ye shall know the **truth**, and the **truth** shall make you free. Jn 8:31-32

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the **truth**, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. Jn 14:6

One of interesting elements of the truth is seen in our oath in court. “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” Truth is often parceled out or slightly slanted (by deleting or embellishing) to the benefit of the speaker. Often this is unconscious and we really have to think carefully as we speak to avoid it. But with Jesus not only is it the truth, but it is the whole unvarnished truth. Regardless of the consequences nothing has been added or removed. This is why John will say in verse 9 that if we go beyond his teaching we no longer have God and if we remain in that teaching we will remain in fellowship with the Father and the Son. If we abide in his word, we will not only truly be his disciples, but know the truth and that truth will make us free.

John's love is “in the truth.” There are two possible meanings in this first use of the word truth. John is either affirming the true sincerity and existence of this love within him, like Paul did in his epistles.

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, Rom 9:1

whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 1 Tim 2:7

Or John is qualifying the quality and emphasis of his love as a love that operates within the confines of truth (whole truth and nothing but truth). Paul speaks of both of these in his epistles.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all

*discernment; 10 so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; Phil 1:9-10*

John has a love that is genuine and sincere founded in knowledge and all discernment of the very words that are the truth. In this way they can always act in the best interests (the things that are excellent) and therefore be sincere.

**and not I only, but also all they that know the truth;**

This is the phrase that has led many to conclude this could be a congregation, and not an individual and perhaps even the universal church. But as we read this letter today with a knowledge of the truth we do not have this love for this congregation or to this individual. It is doubtful that all in the church would have had such a knowledge of either unless he is speaking of the universal church (Mt 16:18). But this cannot be for in verse thirteen he says "*the children of thine elect sister salute thee.*" (1:13) Therefore we have to look for the answer to this riddle somewhere else other than in the individual person or church everyone then and now knew about. Who and what could this be?

Wescott sums it up as a certain character that every other Christian who ever lives will also feel whenever they find such: "*The love is directed to a character. Wherever the character exists, the love exists. This is made clear by the words which follow. The love felt by John and by those whom he describes is felt "for the truth's sake..."*" (Wescott I Jn p 224) Lenski says "the whole church is concerned about the soundness and welfare of every single congregation." (Lenski 2 Jn p 558).

So it is not any individual person or family that all know. It is the "*elect.*" All who have come to know (A Greek Perfect - Found out about the truth in the past and continue to know the truth in the present). All those who so know the truth will feel as John does about the elect of God.

**2 for the truth's sake which abideth in us,**

This is done not because of any characteristics of any group of people. It is done because of the truth's sake. This term is used "*of the reason or cause on account of which anything is or is done, or ought to be done.*"

*"dia.. .NT:1223... with the accusative . . . II. of the Ground or Reason one account of which anything is or is not done; by reason of, because of... 1. of the reason for which a things is done, or of the efficient reason, when for greater perspicuity it may be rendered by... 2. of the reason or cause on account of which anything is or is done, or ought to be done; on account of, because of... "* (Thayer, p. 132-135; 1223)

The truth reveals that there is a class of people that are the elect of God. It also reveals the characteristics of these people so we will recognize them. Finally it reveals that those who will spend eternity with God are our brothers and sisters and they deserve the very best for the sake of, the ground of and account of the truth.

This truth "abides" within us. This word describes the city and country we live in or our home. The place where we dwell and abide, the place where we remain and continue to be.

*"meno... to remain, abide; ... I. intransitively; in reference 2. to TIME; to continue to be, i.e. not to perish, to last, to endure: of persons, to survive, live... of things, not to perish, to last, stand...of purposes, moral excellences,.. Heb 13:1..."* (Thayer, p. 399; 3306)

In this case it is the truth that has taken up residence and lives and abides within our heart. This is based on a conscious choice on our part to put it there and keep it there. This too is in the perfect tense so it is an action we did long ago and have continued to do right up to the present moment.

**and it shall be with us for ever:**

This is a firm promise from God. If we can hold fast to the truth and keep it within our heart now, it will remain in our hearts forever. We will have the opportunity to live in truth always. The term "forever" is the best we can do in English to translate Two Greek terms. The first is *eis* which if we imagined a circle would be the arrow that pierces to enter within. It is always used of moving from one place into another.

*"eis,... a Prep. governing the Accusative, and denoting entrance into, or direction and limit: into, to, towards, for, among. It is used A. PROPERLY I. Of Place, after verbs of going, coming, sailing, flying, falling, living, leading, carrying, throwing, sending; 1. of a place entered or of entrance into a place; into.B. . . . Used METAPHORICALLY, eis I. retains the force of*

entering into anything . . . 2. after verbs of going, coming, leading, etc., *eis* is joined to nouns designating the condition or state into which one passes, (Thayer, p. 183-186; 1519).

Added to this is a second Greek word for an *unbroken age, perpetuity of time and eternity*.

“*aion*... 1. age ... a human lifetime ... life itself... 2. an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity... In the N. T. used 1. for ever .....

” (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit., p. 18; 165).

Truth will go with us when we enter into the unbroken age of eternity where time is perpetual.

### **3 Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father,**

This greeting is very much like Paul’s. Nearly every epistle in the NT begins with grace and peace and some as here add mercy. The reason for this is simple and clear. These were the greetings of kindness and concern that Greek and Hebrew speaking people used at that time. But they take on a much greater significance when they come from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom 1:7**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 1:3**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Cor 1:2**

**Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, Gal 1:3**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph 1:2**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil 1:2**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father. Col 1:2**

church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: **Grace to you and peace. 1Th 1:1**

**Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. II Th 1:2**

**Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 1 Tim 1:2**

**Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 2 Tim 1:2**

**Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. Titus 1:4**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Phile 1:3**

**Grace to you and peace be multiplied. 1 Pet 1:2**

**Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 2 Pet 1:2**

**Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father 2Jn 1:3**

**Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied. Jd 1:2**

**Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; Rev 1:4**

Here these terms “shall be with us” describe not only the present moment, but the future. What is awaiting us from God and from his son Jesus Christ is *grace, mercy and peace*.

Grace is “that which affords joy, pleasure, delight” in the hearts of those who receive it, because it is “*good will, loving kindness,*” and “*favor*” from God and Jesus. This word sets forth the most exciting and pleasant aspects of our relationship with God. In spite of our sins and weaknesses, in spite of our shortcomings God still has such wonderful desires and plans for us.

“*charis*... *grace*; I. e. 1. prop. that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, *sweetness, charm, loveliness*: grace of speech... 2. *good will, lovingkindness, favor*: *good will, loving kindness, favor*: in a broad sense... (*favor* (i.e. act of favoring...)) ... used of the kindness of a master towards his inferiors or servants, and so esp. of God towards men... ..the word *charis* contains the idea of *kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved*... pre-eminently of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving, and grants to sinners the pardon of their offenses, and bids them accept eternal salvation through Christ... *charis* is used of *the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues*... II Th. 1:12... 4. *thanks* (for benefits, services, favors)... to be thankful to one...” (Thayer, p 665-666; 5485)

Mercy has always been sweet to those who have done something deserving punishment. When the one responsible for meting out punishment (a judge) decides to show mercy there is a great relief. There are two sides to an act of mercy. There is “*kindness*” and “*good will*” which must be “*joined with a desire to relieve them*.” No one is worthy, all need the mercy that God and his Jesus shall be with us when we need it most.

*“eleos...mercy; kindness or good will toward the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them...”* 2 of God towards men... 3. the mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life...” (Thayer, p. 203-204; 1656)

The final term “peace” is the feeling one has when all threat and danger has been completely removed to the degree where we no longer even have to think about it. We now have “harmony” and “concord” with God and his son Jesus and now we are “safe.”

*eirene,...* 1. a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war... 2. peace between individuals, i. e. harmony, concord... 3. security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous) ... 5. acc. to a conception distinctly peculiar to Christianity, the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is...” (Thayer, p. 182; 1515)

Jesus purchased these three things for us upon the cross, and we should savor the wonderful blessings it has brought to us.

**in truth and love.**

John then draws a circle around the grace mercy and peace and places them in the midst of “truth and love.” It is within and in the midst of these two qualities that all these things are found. Is this God’s and Jesus’ love and truth or is it ours? Both are affirmed in the various thoughts of commentators of the book. The answer to which one is the most important and which one is the most in accord with Scripture is both. Without love and truth in God none of this could have happened and without love and truth within our own heart none of this could happen. These are two of the most indispensable parts of God’s character and ought to be of ours.

*8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. . . . 16 And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. 1 Jn 4:8, 16*

*Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: Heb 6:17-18*

**4 I rejoice greatly that I have found (certain) of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father.**

It is always a pleasure for those who love the elect and find them walking in the truth. John rejoiced and was glad when he found it.

*chairō... to rejoice, be glad b. in a broader sense, to be well, to thrive; ...* “ (Thayer, p. 663-664; 5463)

This may have been through personal observation or it may have been through the testimony of those who had come from there. But all that John knew led him to this great compliment. Imagine how any one of us would feel if John wrote a letter telling how glad he was over the way we were living. If we walk in the truth, we have such a compliment through this verse. Walking is the Greek way of expressing lifestyle and activities. We say *live* which means where we spend our life. They said *walk* which meant the places and activities that they traveled and spent their time. Walking in the truth means everywhere we go we and everything we do is in harmony with the truth of the word of God. This is just as (proportion, equality, congruity) God gave us commandment. There are so many times in Scripture that God revealed that the things he commands us and reveals to us is the truth and that what we need to do is walk in them.

*Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15*

## 5 And now

With all the above background John now moves to the intent of the letter. Although the term “now” can either express time (*now*, i.e. *at the present time*;) or progression (*under these circumstances; in the present state of affairs*), here it is clearly progression

“nun... adv. now... 1. adv. of Time, *now*, i.e. *at the present time*; ...a. so used that by the thing which is now said to be or to be done the present time is opposed to past time: . . . b. opposed to future time: . . . c. Sometimes *nun* with the present is used of what will occur forthwith or soon,. . . d. with the imperative it often marks the proper or fit time for doing a thing: 2. Like our now ... it stands in a conclusion or sequence; *as things now are, as the matter now stands; under these circumstances; in the present state of affairs; since these things are so; as it is...*” (Thayer, p. 430; 3568)

Even though John has seen the children of this elect lady walking in the truth, he also sees the darkening skies of error and apostasy and a terrible storm of deceit approaching the church. “*Under these circumstances*” he gives this warning. By walking in truth they have shown their zeal and integrity along with their faith and perseverance. But there is one exceedingly important command for them to *now* (*in the present state of affairs*) pay special attention to since it has become critically important.

John attacked the false doctrines facing the church at that time on three fronts.

1. The command to love (v 5);
2. Walk in his commandments (v 6, 9-11);
3. Hold fast to the confession that Jesus is the Christ and came in the flesh.

**I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.**

John opens his discussion with a pleading entreaty. We might say “please lady” at the beginning just to get attention. It is used of a *request, entreaty, and beseeching*. So the recipient would understand this as some form of request. “*Please lady ... love one another*”

“*erotao,...* Sept. for ...; *to ask*;, i.e. *to question*:... 2. *to ask* i. e. *to request, entreat, beg, beseech...*” (Thayer, p. 252; 2065).

John is referring to the powerful command from Jesus that we love one another. Yet this is not a new command or a command modified to fit the current circumstances. It is a command that all disciples have been given by Jesus from the very beginning. It is not something new to learn. Jesus gave this command the night before his crucifixion. What is amazing is that these false doctrines were denying this fundamental command. In their knowledge, they saw no need to feel care and concern for the needs, contentment or well-being of others. Jesus sought to move us away from a selfish life into a life in which others needs are at least as important as our own, and they were seeking to bring them back.

*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Jn 13:34-35*

The divine *agape*-love is a part of the divine nature given to man in the garden. Through sin and selfishness man completely forgot about it. Jesus came to reacquaint us with this important principle of giving, sacrificing and working as hard for the benefit of others as we do for ourselves. The false teachings of that time were threatening to undermine this most important mandate from Jesus so John pro-actively warns of this danger.

This brings up an interesting element of *agape*-love. Even when disciples thoroughly know and understand, and are even doing the command, when dangers arise from error that could tempt disciples from their faithfulness it is wise to remind them. Truly repetition is a fundamental part of all servants of God. This is why Moses gave Deuteronomy and Joshua his final exhortations before their death. Even though brethren know God’s commands they must be warned and exhorted about them.

*I charge (thee) in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.** 2 Tim 4:1-2*

who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works. 15 These things **speak and exhort and reprove with all authority**. Let no man despise thee. Titus 2:14-15

Jesus made it clear that one of the most important identifying features of the church of Christ is the love they hold for one another. But this is a love not of human feelings of even sympathy and mercy alone. It is far more. It transcends and often works contrary to human love which is why it can only be accomplished through obedience to God's commands.

*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph 3:17-19*

## **6 And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments.**

The Holy Spirit here draws a circle around *agape*-love and points an arrow at it. Without "*this*" it is not love. This is the only way to be certain that what is being done is truly being done in *agape*-love. With another arrow he points to its true destination.

*"hina... I. An adverb of place,... a. where; in what place. b. in what place; whither... II a final conjunction (for from local direction, indicated by the adverb, the transition was easy to mental direction or intention)denoting purpose and end: to the intent that; to the end that, in order that;... it is used 1. prop of the purpose or end;... " (Thayer, p. 302-304; 2443)*

Such love directs and leads into a specific walk. It is a walk in proportion to his commands. Every step on the strait and narrow path to life must be directed by the commands of God. John recorded Jesus' words on this topic many times in his final night.

*Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and (that) your joy may be made full. 12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. John 15:9-14*

Like a road map leading to a destination, God's commands lead us to the destination of love. Without such direction, it is impossible to reach it.

**This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it.**

Using the same formula (This is) as above he encircles the commandment and then using the same balance (even as) reveals that the command given now is not a new command. Thus what John is teaching is exactly the same thing they have always taught. It is the new teachers who are bringing in new doctrines and by their very newness are proven to be false.

Even today this is the right approach. Not the new commands developed today for they must always be suspect and given careful study to see if they are truly God's commands. But the commands we find from the beginning are the commands we should follow.

*Thus saith Jehovah, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: but they said, We will not walk (therein). Jer. 6:16*

## **7 For many deceivers are gone forth into the world,**

John now reveals the urgency for the above command. Using "*for*" he gives the "*reason why*" and the "*ground*" for his warning.

*"hoti... I. the substance or contents (of a statement), that; 1. joined to verbs of saying and declaring... II the reason why anything is said to be or to be done, because, since, for that, for, (a causal conjunct. ...)... a. it is added to a speaker's words to show what ground he gives for his opinion;... b. hoti makes reference to some word or words that precede or immediately follow it..." (Thayer p 458-460; 3754)*

The reason is solemn indeed. The "measure, weight, force, intensity, size, continuance, or repetition" of false teachers is "*great, strong, intense, large.*"

*"polus,... b. with nouns denoting an action an emotion, a state, which can be said to have as it were measure, weight, force, intensity, size, continuance, or repetition, much I. q. great, strong, intense, large... c. of time much, long... d. Neut. sing. POLU, much, substantively, I. q. many things... much, adverbially, of the mode and degree of an action..." (Thayer, p. 529; 4183)*

Although this could simply refer to numbers (our translation), it could also refer to their force and intensity. Very powerful deceivers have gone forth.

*“planos... wandering, roving; trans and trop. misleading, leading into error... ho planos substantively... as we say, a vagabond, ‘tramp’ impostor, ... hence univ. a corrupter, deceiver...”* (Thayer, p. 515; 4108)

This is one of the characteristics of false teachers. They “*mislead*” “*lead into error*” and “*corrupt*.” This is not John’s judgment or assessment. It is the assessment of the Holy Spirit. This is a difficult thing to grasp. One would think if someone did not agree with the teachings of Christ they would just reject it and go their way. But such has never been the case. Instead of rejecting, they seek to modify it to their own liking and at the same time deceive those who do hold to the doctrine and lead them into their way of thinking. There were and will always be many and their smooth arguments will be very powerful.

*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent. Rom. 16:17-18*

*For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. Titus 1:10-11*

*But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; 1Tim. 4:1-2*

*But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not. 2Pet. 2:1-3*

**(even) they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh.**

In John’s day these deceivers had a clearly identifying mark. As we noted in his first epistle, one of the tenets of Greek philosophy is that matter is evil and God can have no direct contact with it. When these people entered the church, instead of giving up their philosophy, they had to modify the gospel to make it fit. Therefore, since God could not be in a evil fleshly body, Jesus could not have come in the flesh.

John makes it clear and forceful. Anyone who refuses to confess (*homo-logeo - speak the same as*) that Jesus Christ did indeed come in the flesh is a “*deceiver and antichrist*.” Since God clearly revealed that Jesus did come in the flesh, and the eyewitnesses who were there affirmed that it was so, any one claiming to serve Jesus but refusing to confess this is not a true believer.

He is only deceiving himself and others if he claims to be a Christian. There are two affirmations. First, Jesus is the Christ. By linking Jesus name to Christ John revealed they are one and the same. Second, the Christ came in the flesh as Jesus. God affirmed this as did Jesus. John is again affirming what he has always affirmed. It is not new or modified, they have changed the teaching and John has proclaimed their changes are false.

**This is the deceiver and the antichrist.**

The philosophies of that day that created the pride of life and the acceptance of their peers required that they continue to hold to the belief that matter is evil and spirit is good. That matter and evil cannot share the same place at the same time. That Jesus was only a man and that the spirit that inhabited him did not join with flesh in any way. To become a Christian one had to renounce this teaching and pay the price in ridicule and persecution. Those who wanted to be a part of this new group of people but who also wanted to be accepted by their peers had to reject the gospel or become deceivers. many chose the former and others many others the latter.

Yet if they refused to repent and reject the errors they had been taught, but still wanted to enter the church and modify the teachings to fit their old beliefs are truly an antichrist (*one who*



opposes and stand against Christ). Anything they teach that leads to the conclusion that Jesus was not the Christ or that Christ was never in the flesh must deceive those who have accepted the truth.

### **8 Look to yourselves,**

We would say keep an eye on yourself or watch your step. The dangers here are real. The possibilities of serious consequences frightening.

*Wherefore let him that thinks he stands **take heed** lest he fall. 1 Cor 10:12*

***Take heed**, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: Heb 3:12*

*but **I buffet my body**, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. 1 Cor 9:27*

*Brethren, **I could not myself yet to have laid hold**: but one thing (I do), forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before. 14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:13-14*

No matter how much we have learned, how long we have been a Christian, how many battles we have won or how mature we are, we are not safe. There is a very real danger of apostasy and those who ignore this are setting themselves up to fall.

### **that ye lose not the things which we have wrought,**

All the above is done so that (*in order that, for the purpose that*) we might not “lose.” Although the word does mean lose, it means much more than that. These are things that are not simply lost, but also destroyed and ruined beyond repair. Those who lose what John speaks of will also “incur the loss of true or eternal life;” and will “perish.”

*“apollumi... to destroy ... 1. to destroy i.e. to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin... contextually, to declare that one must be put to death ... metaph. to devote or give over to eternal misery ... contextually, by one’s conduct to cause another to lose eternal salvation ... Mid. to perish, to be lost, ruined, destroyed ... A... tropically, to incur the loss of true or eternal life; to be delivered up to eternal misery ... B. of things; to be blotted out, to vanish away... to perish, of things which on being thrown away are decomposed... or which are ruined so that they can no longer subserve the use for which they were designed, ... 2. to destroy i.e. to lose;” (Thayer, p. 610-611; 4982)*

John’s warning now moves to a different approach. All that has been done for these people is now on the line. All that God did in sending Jesus, all that Jesus did upon the cross, all the truth that the Holy Spirit had revealed and all that the apostles and prophets had done to take it into all the world. This is the “work and labor” that “we” have wrought!

*“ergazomai... 1. absol. a. to work, labor, do work: it is opposed to inactivity or idleness... b. to trade, to make gains by trading ... 2. trans. a. (to work i. e.) to do, work out... with acc. of virtues or vices, (to work i. e.) to exercise, perform, commit... b. to work for, earn by working, to acquire...” (Thayer, p. 247; 2038)*

Listen to Paul speak on the same theme.

*Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, **lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain. Gal 4:10-11***

*Do all things without murmurings and questionings: 15 that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, 16 holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, **that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain. Phil 2:14-16***

*For yourselves, brethren, **know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain: 2 but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict. 1Thes 2:1-2***

*For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, **lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain. 1Th 3:5***

There are two ways to read the above. The first is selfish. Paul wanting all the labor he has done to remain for himself so he will be commended on the day of judgment . The second and right way is that Paul was deeply concerned that all the work he had done to bring about their salvation was to be in vain and they would be lost in spite of all the labor that he been done to bring about their salvation.

John is deeply concerned about the consequences of the work of these deceivers. They

threaten to undo all the good that the apostles have done. Like a pest entering the fruit after all the sowing, reaping and gathering had been completed and still everything is destroyed.

As we look back from the perspective of history we can see John's concern realized. The path that led into the great apostasy was brought about by these "*antichrists*." For many centuries the terrible consequences of the blending of human philosophy with Scripture has deceived billions. The hard work of the apostles in the first century to give the pure doctrine of the Lord has been in vain for all who follow these "*blind guides*."

### **but that ye receive a full reward.**

John now returns to the second person. For the true loser or gainer here is not the apostles but the individual members who have so much to lose or gain. The only way to receive this "*full*" reward is to remain faithful unto death. If they allow these deceivers to gain any credibility with them, they were in danger of losing everything they had worked so hard to gain.

### **9 Whosoever goeth onward**

John again uses the present active participle. He takes the continuous action of "going onward" and turns it into the person who is doing it. It could also have been translated "*all the ones going onward*" or "*all going onward*."

We now enter another textual issue. The Textus Receptus (Received Text) has a different word than the one used here. Both words are close in meaning. I include both words for our consideration.

*"proago... 1. trans. to lead forward, lead forth... 2. intrans. ... a. to go before... preceding i. e. prior in point of time, previous... b. to proceed, go forward: in a bad sense, to go further than is right or proper,... to transgress the limits of true doctrine... II Jn. 9..."* (Thayer, p. 537; 4254)

*parabaino; ... properly, to go by the side of ... to go past or to pass over without touching a thing; tropically, to overstep, neglect, violate, transgress, ... with an accusative of the thing (often so in secular authors from Aeschylus down (cf. para... ): . . . Mt15:2; . . . he that transgresseth, oversteppeth, i. e. who does not hold to the true doctrine, (Thayer p. ; 3844)*

The better texts used by Wescott and Hort use the former, while the Textus Receptus uses the second term. Because of the reliability of these texts, all the later scholars have accepted it without question. Since the differences are so slight, it makes little difference, but since it is one of the facts of textual criticism, it is wise to at least note it. The meaning is only slightly changed in the figure used. One is going beyond a line while the other is trespassing into an area they do not belong (also crossing a line).

This *whosoever* refers to every class and kind. Any Christian whether an apostle, elder, preacher, mature brother or sister or even a babe in Christ.

*I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Acts 20:29-30*

*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. Gal 2:11*

*But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. Gal 1:8*

### **and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God:**

Abide is also a present active participle (*The not-abiding/remaining one*). This time *remaining* or "*abiding within*" is personified into the person who actively refuses to do this. When boundaries mean nothing, and the passing over out outside of them is common, such a person personifies this action.

Anyone who has studied the Scriptures knows that God has always placed a fence around things that are safe and right and things that are dangerous and evil. He did it in the garden of Eden but Adam and Eve went beyond and would not abide within that boundary. God did the same with Cain and Abel and many others. Some abide within and others move outside. By the time of Moses not only were the commands boundaries, but so also were the words that contained them.

*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you. Deut 4:2*

*Every word of God is tried: He is a shield unto them that take refuge in him. 6 Add thou not unto his words, Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Prov 30:5-6*

Jesus and his apostles made these warnings even stronger.

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Mt 7:21-23*

*This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain do they worship me, Teaching (as their) doctrines the precepts of men. Mt 15:8-9*

The teachings of Christ were even then closing. It was God's intent that once the faith was delivered it was to be delivered for all time.

*Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. Jude 1:3*

*seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; 2 Pet 1:3*

So now it is closed. Those who wrote the Scriptures were of God. Those who go beyond the Scriptures for any reason and add human philosophy or human wisdom are here warned of the consequences.

*We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. 1 Jn 4:6*

*Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not (to go) beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other. 1 Cor. 4:6*

The spirit of truth is in Scripture. The spirit of error is all that is outside of Scripture. Anyone who will not abide within that teaching also leave the fellowship of God.

**he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.**

With the same present active participle with only the "not-negation" removed John now describes the quality of person he was describing to the Lady in the previous verse. The person who continually and actively remains within the teachings and the commands of Christ will remain in fellowship with both the Father and the Son. Paul approaches this same idea but in a different way. Remember that God had a very specific goal. He was seeking to screen and remove a certain quality of men and if it would not be removed then they would either not enter or not remain.

*For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, (are called): 27 but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; 28 and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, (yea) and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: 29 that no flesh should glory before God. 1 Cor 1:26-29*

The teaching of Christ will not allow the pride of men. The very act of adding to or removing from the teachings of Christ (going onward/transgressing) reveals the pride of life. No flesh (human) is to glory before God. Therefore the act of not remaining or remaining reveals pride vs humility. So John can speak very confidently. No one who adds any of his/her own ideas to the teaching of Christ in order to make it better fit their own ideas can possibly have fellowship with God for that very act reveals their complete incompatibility with God.

**10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching,** There is always coming and going among people. Friends, family, neighbors, acquaintances, business relationships come and go. They enter, remain for a time, then leave. But among all these people John circles a specific individual. Anyone who does not bring this teaching. What teaching? The teaching about "going onward and abiding not." Such people are the most dangerous threat to the devout Christian. They know their armor and know how to pierce it. They know their weakness and doubts and use them to destroy. These are not simple unbelievers who do not accept any teaching of Christ. These are those who know the teaching and to doctrine, but have gone onward and no longer abide within.

**receive him not into (your) house, and give him no greeting:**

These social norms and courtesies are extended to everyone. We greet everyone and invite many into our home. But John here forbids such a relationship with those who hold to such doctrines. This is very similar to Paul's commands regarding church discipline. Except for the most part these are not people who have been disciplined but people who are outside. This is a difficult command to keep. There are so many fine lines. Many of those we seek to convert are among this group of people. They are blind following blind, but still they have the right to hear the gospel. Even the worst of false teachers initially should be given the opportunity to hear the gospel. But any indication that they have come not to learn but to teach should end the relationship. It is never wise to continue any form of fellowship with such people. Their influence can corrupt and even eat like gangrene.

*But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, 17 and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. 2 Tim 2:16-18 Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? . . . 29 Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? 30 Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? 31 I protest by that glorifying in you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. 33 Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals. 34 Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God: I speak (this) to move you to shame. 1 Cor 15:12; 29-34*

**11 for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.**

This passage helps give a limitation to the above. These are people who are doing evil works. Not good works and not ignorant works, but evil works. Those who are in the service of Satan. These are the false teachers who like the devil are going up and do and to and fro seeking whom they can devour. Paul spoke of the in Corinthians. Jude and Peter also describe them.

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ. 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or (if) ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different gospel, which ye did not accept, ye do well to bear with (him). 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. 15 It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works. . . . 19 For ye bear with the foolish gladly, being wise (yourselves). 20 For ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you (captive), if he exalteth himself, if he smiteth you on the face. 2 Cor 11: 3-4; 13-15; 19-20*

*For, uttering great swelling (words) of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error; 19 promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. 2 Pet 2:18-19*

*Woe unto them! For they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. . . . 14 And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. . . . 17 But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 That they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit. Jude 1:11; 14-15; 17-19*

Such men are to be avoided and feared. They are not people who should be allowed into our homes nor treated as though we approve of them in any way. To do so is to be in fellowship with their evil works.

*"koinoneo,... a. to come into communion or fellowship, to become a sharer, be made a partner... b. to enter into fellowship, join one's self as an associate, make one's self a sharer or partner..." (Thayer, p. 351-352; 2841).*

**12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not (write them) with paper and ink:**

There are many things that should not be written in pen and ink. Personal issues, confidences, things that could be misunderstood and private matters. We do not know which of these was involved in John's decision not to write them. All who read this letter would have enjoyed knowing about these things, but they have been kept hidden and there is no value to any speculation. There were matters either private or congregational that needed to be dealt with in a different way than by letter.

**but I hope to come unto you, and to speak face to face, that your joy may be made full.**

John hopes to come soon and in person deal with all these things. The only hint he gives as to the content is the goal (*hina* - intention denoting purpose and end: *to the intent that; to the end that, in order that*) the conversation will bring about. As a result, intent and goal this conversation will bring about a full joy. It is difficult to say if this refers to the fulfillment of joy after this life is over or at present. The term "be made full" is a perfect participle. An action done in the past and continuing up to the present moment. John's goal by his conversation is to bring to completion the hope that had already been in their heart.

**13 The children of thine elect sister salute thee.**

All the issues of the first verse come up again in this verse. Is this a lady or a church. Is this a sister elect church of a girl born into the same family and now elect. The reader can return to the first verse to consider all the pros and cons. The key as pointed out there is the term *elect*. A special chosen of God person or class. The greeting comes from one set of elect to another set of elect.