

THE ELECT LADY & GAIUS: 2 & 3 JOHN

2 John 1-3 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.

- Elder is either a reference to his age or his role in the church. This is believed to be John because of the style and outside historical references.
- The elect lady is either an individual woman and her children or a local church (referenced in feminine form - the church is the bride of Christ and the Greek *ekklesia* is in the feminine form).
- Not only does the writer love "her", but all who know the love and abide in truth.

4-8 I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. And now I ask you, dear lady - not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning - that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.

- He finds joy in hearing that her children are walking in truth and loving one another.
- We've talked in detail about the antichrist. Many existed at that time.
- A call to continue in faith is encouraged so that it may not be in vain.

9-11 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

- Is the teaching of Christ about Christ who had come in the flesh, or what Christ taught? Most understand it to be all that He taught (same phrasing as Matthew 16:12), but no doubt it included His deity. Jesus also taught a new commandment, etc. So, it's probably not just one truth surrounding who Jesus was.
- God has authority and there are those who attempt to go outside of His boundaries. Such false teachers are not to be encouraged. We can love all people, but acting in such a way that promotes teaching outside of Christ is not to be encouraged. If we do we are in fellowship with what is false.

12-13 Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete. The children of your elect sister greet you.

- Most of us are like this writer. We see the value in speaking face to face, but sometimes mail/email is all you've got (haha).
- The children of her elect sister is either her relative and nephews/nieces or another congregation.
 - It is interesting how no specific names are given if they're individuals. Reference 3 John.
- So, in this letter they are reminded to love the Lord with their minds and keep to His word.

3 John 1-4 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. For I rejoiced greatly

when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

- Again, elder is either a reference to his age or his role in the church. This is believed to be John because of the style and outside historical references.
- We can't be for sure who this is.
- Notice again the importance of truth. This is what brings joy to his life! It's not that the physical isn't important (do you see that?), but the spiritual is of most importance.

5-8 Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

- So, Gaius is putting love for brethren into action. I see in 2 & 3 John principles of 1 John put into action.
- Gaius supported ministers he didn't know (yes, such men were supported individually and also collectively). These ministers weren't looking for financial support outside of the body. When we support such individuals, we are doing our part of spreading the truth.
- This is a stark contrast to how we should deal with false teachers (2 John 10).

9-10 I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

- There's a good chance that Diotrephes and Gaius worshipped together (or why bring him up since he would have no effect on Gaius?). Did Diotrephes destroy the letter or just ignore it?
- Was Diotrephes an elder himself? I have no idea, but we know he was selfish and liked to take charge. He didn't acknowledge John.
- He had nonsense charges against John and others and John would address it face to face.
- Why do people allow such men?
 - They're either scared and do not take a stand.
 - They agree with such people and justify their actions.
- He is the opposite of brotherly love. Not only does he refuse to help gospel preachers, but he threatens and kicks out those who do.
 - If Diotrephes and Gaius worshipped together it would make sense why John is writing to him specifically, because it would mean he's not intimidated by such men.

11-12 Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

- So, who do you imitate? Do you have someone here you would follow?
- Do you think someone would follow your example? Should someone follow your example?
- Perhaps Demetrius delivered the letter. We're not sure who he is.

13-15 I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.

- Same ending as 2 John. He wants to see them face to face!
- I love that - greet each friend by name. Have you ever prayed with and for someone by name?