

2 John

1 The elder to the chosen lady and her children,¹ whom I love in the truth,² and not I only, but indeed all those who have come to know the truth,² on account of the truth that remains in us and will be with us into the age.³ **3** Grace, mercy, and shalom—from God the Father and from Jesus the Messiah, the Son of the Father⁴—will be with us in the truth and love.⁵

4 I rejoiced exceedingly when I found out that some of your children are living in the truth⁶ just as we have instruction from the Father.⁷ **5** And now, I ask you, lady, not as writing a new instruction⁸ to you, but that which we had from the beginning,⁹ that we love one another.¹⁰ **6** Indeed, this is love, that we live according to His teachings.¹¹ This is His teaching,¹² just as you heard at the beginning,¹³ that you should live in it, **7** because many deceivers have gone out among those who live in the present realm,¹⁴ who do not acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, although he has come in the flesh.¹⁵ This is deceit and opposition to the Messiah.¹⁶

8 Watch yourselves so that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but, instead, you receive the full reward.¹⁷ **9** Everyone who keeps advancing and does not remain in the teaching of the Messiah does not have God.¹⁸ The one who remains in the teaching¹⁹ has both the Father and the Son. **10** If someone comes to you²⁰ and does not bring this teaching,²¹ do not receive him into your house, and do not say to him, “Rejoice.”²² **11** For the one who says to him, “Rejoice,” has his evil deeds in common with him.²³

12 Even though I have many things to write to you,²⁴ I do not wish to do so with paper and ink, but I hope to come to you and to speak face to face in order that your joy may reach its fullest extent. **13** The children of your chosen sister²⁵ greet you.

¹ ἐκλεκτῆ κυρία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς – the woman predestined by God to eternal salvation and her actual children; cf. v. 4

² οὗς ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ – whom John welcomes into the believing community and is devoted to caring for by intellectually promoting their faith with the message of Jesus as the Messiah in the midst of his own belief in the truth, the apostolic message that the Father possessed and communicated via the Son and his apostles, and that John spells out in more detail in 1 John (cf. especially 1 John 1:1-4 and 3 John 1). Loving God and his people in the midst of believing the truth of Jesus as the Messiah and intercessor for sinners is central to John's understanding of manifesting authentic belief (ἀλήθεια is used 5 times in 2 John).

³ διὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν τὴν μένουσαν ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ μεθ' ἡμῶν ἔσται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα – because of the truth that remains embedded in us who have embraced it because of God's miraculous and gracious work of regenerating us, and the truth that will remain a part of who we are even into the final age of the eternal Kingdom of God where Jesus will rule over us as king. These ideas of coming to know the truth and promoting people's belief in and understanding of the truth are central to John's own understanding of the gospel.

⁴ καὶ παρὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς – the Messiah, the Son of the Father = the final and eternal Davidic King (cf. 2 Samuel 7). This is the central truth about Jesus that people have come to know and believe and that results in their loving God and his people.

⁵ ἔσται μεθ' ἡμῶν χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη... ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἀγάπῃ – God's grace, mercy, and promise of a shalom-like life in eternity will be "ours" as believers because of God's truth and the love which He has shown us through Jesus.

⁶ ἐχάρην λίαν ὅτι εὔρηκα ἐκ τῶν τέκνων σου περιπατοῦντας ἐν ἀληθείᾳ – John is glad that some of her actual children (cf. v. 1) as sinners are pursuing morality, while they also remain humbly repentant and expectant of God's eternal mercy through Jesus as Messiah and intercessor at the final judgment (cf. 3 John 3).

⁷ καθὼς ἐντολὴν ἐλάβομεν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς – The instructions that they are following come through the apostles from the Father of Jesus, the Son of God and final king of the Davidic Covenant, and, therefore, through the Son, Jesus (cf. 1 John 1:1-5).

⁸ ἐντολὴν καινὴν

⁹ ἀλλὰ ἦν εἶχομεν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς – the plural of apostolic identity, in order to emphasize their authority (cf. 1 John 1:1). John is referring to when Jesus first taught the gospel and message from the Father and which the apostles heard (cf. 1 John 1ff.). John's own authority is based upon his having started learning the message about Jesus when Jesus' himself began conveying the message. No one can have this level of authority without this experience—except Paul, who was unique and taught by Jesus later. Therefore, by definition, the false teachers who are denying that Jesus is the Messiah while even having come from John's community of believers do not have this level of authority (cf. 1 John 2:18,19; 4:1; 2 John 7).

¹⁰ ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους – We all as Christians love one another as part of the way we manifest our belief in the truth of Jesus as the Messiah. These ideas of living in the truth and loving God by promoting the belief and understanding of his people are central to John's own understanding of the gospel.

¹¹ ἵνα περιπατῶμεν κατὰ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ – the Father's teachings that came through Jesus as the Messiah

¹² αὕτη ἡ ἐντολὴ ἔστιν – that we love one another in the midst of believing in Jesus as the Messiah. The false teachers are not only rejecting Jesus as the Messiah but also mistreating God's people who believe this truth.

¹³ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς – when you (pl.) first heard the gospel. John connects the fact that he has apostolic authority by virtue of his hearing Jesus' message from the start of Jesus' proclaiming it and the fact that it was this message that the woman and her children heard that first introduced them to the reality of Jesus' existence.

¹⁴ ὅτι πολλοὶ πλάνοι εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸν κόσμον – John has experienced many people who have come into the Christian community and been exposed to the apostolic message of Jesus as the Messiah and then left the community thinking that they know better what the truth of the Bible is, i.e., that its focus is the Mosaic Covenant and that Jesus is not the Messiah.

¹⁵ ἐρχόμενον ἐν σαρκί – These false teachers has rejected Jesus as the Messiah although he has appeared and proven himself to be such through his miracles and propitiatory offering.

¹⁶ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ πλάνος καὶ ὁ ἀντίχριστός – The opposition of the false teachers is a level of self-deceit whereby they are not being honest with themselves and others about the profound level of their immoral condition. cf. 1 John 2:18,19; 4:1

¹⁷ μισθὸν πλήρη – lit. the full wage; of eternal salvation by God's grace through persevering belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Thus, the existential nature of human choices and belief in the truth that is a struggle to accomplish.

¹⁸ πᾶς ὁ προάγων καὶ μὴ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεὸν οὐκ ἔχει – referring to a person who at first seems to embrace the apostolic message, but then who goes beyond it and distorts it by adding elements to it that are not actually a part of the biblical worldview, even though some of the elements come from the Bible (e.g., the Mosaic Covenant) but are misplaced and misapplied in the false teachers' (Jews') worldview, thus causing them to reject Jesus as the Messiah (in this case, explicitly), which is also demonstrated by mistreating and even rejecting authentic Christians (cf. 1 and 3 John (especially Diotrefes)). The problem today is that this same kind of adding to the biblical worldview from platonic, mystical, pagan, and American worldviews and misapplying biblical elements so as to distort the biblical worldview actually occurs within the community that uses the label Christian and requires that church participants stay

within the limits of “orthodoxy.” John’s perspective is that only those who remain within the true, biblical, and apostolic limits of the message are theists (cf. 3 John 11).

¹⁹ ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ – The irony is that John is calling for his readers to remain within the limits of the biblical, apostolic (i.e., Christic) message and not add foreign elements to it.

²⁰ εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς – claiming to have been sent by an authoritative leader or leaders, even from John himself, and therefore claiming to be able to speak the true message of Jesus (cf. 1 John 2:18,19)

²¹ ταύτην τὴν διδαχὴν – of God as the Father and Jesus as the Son, the final Davidic king of the eternal kingdom of God. There were traveling “teachers” who were emissaries of basically two authoritative groups, the apostles and the Jewish Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The actual emissaries from John traveled in Asia while there were Judaistic teachers there too, some who were from the Jewish Sanhedrin and some who claimed to be from John. John’s exhortation is to avoid buying into the Judaistic teaching that focused strictly on the Mosaic Covenant and rejected Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah.

²² μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε – Do not give these traveling false teachers the impression that you agree with their rejection of the apostolic message and Jesus as the Messiah by being supportive of them with your “Christian” hospitality. We must remember that this is the apostle John who is writing this and has given “the chosen lady” an accurate presentation of the apostolic message from the beginning of her own experience with the gospel. Distinguishing between good teachers and bad teachers can be much more difficult today, especially since we do not have the actual persons of the apostles with whom to consult but are seeking to understand the same apostolic documents that the bad teachers are studying. Add to this that no one fully and accurately knows the biblical truth since the death of the apostles, and we have a situation that requires extreme humility, grace, love, and ongoing discussion.

²³ κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς – Jesus and the apostles have made it abundantly clear that Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah. To reject this claim is to reject truth and the God behind this truth, which, therefore, is an evil act towards God. The readers should not want to share in this evil by supporting the false teachers who deny Jesus as the Messiah (cf. 1 John 1:3 for similar use of noun form, ἡ κοινωνία, that refers to sharing in something. In the case of 1 John 1:3, it refers to sharing in an understanding of the gospel).

²⁴ πολλὰ ἔχων ὑμῖν γράφειν – specific to “the chosen lady” besides the circular letter of 1 John

²⁵ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου τῆς ἐκλεκτῆς – The children of the sister of “the chosen lady” must live in Ephesus and have become believers in Jesus as the Messiah.