

A Study of 2 John

I. Outline.

01. Greeting (2 John 1-3).
02. Rejoicing over faithful children (4).
03. Love one another (5).
04. Warning against false teachers (6-11).
05. Hoping to come see her (12-13).

II. Summary.

2 John is addressed to “**the elect lady and her children.**” Much discussion is centered on the identity of the recipient. Was it actually an individual or was it a church. Most likely it was an individual. An obviously key word in the short letter is TRUTH, which appears five times in the first four verses. A very important emphasis of the Book is the necessity of **ABIDING in the doctrine of Christ.** To go beyond that body of doctrine places one out of fellowship with God and with Christ. Lending support to false teachers causes one to become guilty of the same error that the false teacher to whom you have lent support was guilty of teaching.

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Church.

If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

IV. Words/Phrases to Study

- 2 John... “As a practical consideration it seems the study of Second John should bring renewed attention to what is sometimes called ‘doctrinal preaching.’ It is important to teach people to assemble for worship, to give generously, and to live uprightly; but we should scarcely be content to stop here. It is also important, in fact, vital, for us to teach the word of God, instill its precepts into hearts, uphold the truth against false doctrine, and to create within people a love and respect for the doctrine of Christ which transcends all other loyalties” [Alan E. Highers, “The Living Message of the Book of Second John,” in *The Living Messages of the Books of the New Testament*,” edited by Warren and Elkins, p. 312].
- 2 John 1.1... **THE ELDER**—“The word is used with reference to age in 1 Timothy 5:2; 1 Peter 5:5; with reference to office, Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:4, 6, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 1 Timothy 5:1, 17, 19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1” [W.M. Sinclair, *The Epistles of St. John*, A Bible Commentary for English Readers, Editor: Charles Ellicott, an e-Sword Module].
- 2 John 1.1... **THE ELECT LADY AND HER CHILDREN**—“As noted from the ASV margin, the Greek term for lady might also be translated as a proper name, Cyria; but this tendency to view this letter as being written to a prominent Christian woman of that era is rejected here. As Roberts pointed out, “It is also true that the word for elect could be translated as a proper name, Eclecte.”^[9] However, as Roberts noted, the word for “elect” is used as an adjective by John in [2 John 1:1](#):13. There is absolutely no reason for assuming that any personal name is involved here. “The elect lady” is a metaphorical reference to the church, often spoken of in the New Testament under the figure of a bride, or a pure woman. Roberts agreed that, “The most likely possibility, however, is that the elect lady is not a person at all but a personification for a local church.”^[10] This would seem to be a mandatory conclusion from the last clause of the verse” [Burton Coffman].
- 2 John 1.2... **FOR THE TRUTH’S SAKE, WHICH DWELLETH IN US**—“John loved this faithful sister and the children embraced in the address, not because of an unusual attractiveness which they may have possessed, nor for any personal charm they may have exhibited, but because of the truth which

dwelt both in him and in them. It is a vivid and impressive description of the reason for the love each faithful disciple feels for all other disciples” [Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude*, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1973, p. 339].

- 2 John 1.4... **...WALKING IN TRUTH**—“This expression conveys the idea of a believer who confesses the truth of God's Word and who lives in harmony with that Word. Everything he says or does portrays a life that is governed by God's law. John writes that the Father has commanded us to walk in the truth (compare 1 John 1:6-7; 2:6; 3:23). By his use of the word *Father*, John indirectly reminds his readers that ‘truth came through Jesus Christ ... the One and Only, who is at the Father's side’” (John 1:17-18)” [Simon J. Kistemaker, *James and the Epistles of John*, 1986, Baker's New Testament Commentary, an e-Sword Module].
- 2 John 1.6... **THIS IS LOVE, THAT WE WALK AFTER HIS COMMANDMENTS**—“To walk after His commandments is to walk in the light (1 John 1:7). He stresses that this love, which results from walking in the light, involves obeying God's and Christ's commandments. Indeed these were centered in the reality of love, for they were to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5-6), and their neighbor as themselves (Leviticus 19:18), which would be revealed in the way they lived their lives” [Peter Pett, *Commentary Series on the Bible*, an e-Sword Module].
- 2 John 1.7... **MANY DECEIVERS ARE ENTERED INTO THE WORLD**—“Those who cause others to wander. (Compare 1 John 2:26; 4:1-6; 1 Timothy 4:1.)” [W.M. Sinclair].
- 2 John 1.7... **THIS IS A DECEIVER AND AN ANTICHRIST**—“John spoke of this in his first epistle. This is the only place (other than I John) that refers to antichrist. They deny that Jesus came in the flesh. People want to live in a wonderful little world without worry of false teachers. They deny that there is a problem there. We are to recognize these false teachers and refute their teachings and point them out to others. The false teachers are deceivers. It may be that John is speaking of people who are leaving the church and gone into the world. He may be referring to people who teach falsely and go out into the world to gain converts to their perverted religion. A lot of denominationalists have never been in the church, but go out teaching perverted religion to gain converts to their hell-bound ways” [T.J. Clarke, *Bible Institute of Missouri Notes*, Produced by Bradley Cobb, 2014, an e-Sword Module].
- 2 John 1.8... **THOSE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE WROUGHT**—“That which was wrought out by the apostles was the gospel delivered through them by means of the Holy Spirit to the people to whom they preached. Taught here in emphatic fashion is: (1) the possibility of apostasy; (2) the importance of constant and careful self-examination; (3) the vital necessity of ceaseless vigilance against the blandishments of the evil one” [Guy N. Woods, p. 346].
- 2 John 1.8... **RECEIVE A FULL REWARD**—“Smith explains: ‘We have worked together: see that you do not forfeit the reward of your labor. Get a full wage. Be not like workmen who toward the close of the day fall off, doing their work badly or losing time, and get less than a day's pay. . . . We have been fellow-workers thus far, and I mean to be faithful to the last: see that you also be so.’ He adds, ‘Their danger lay in taking up with false teaching and losing the comfort of the gospel in its simplicity and fullness.’” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, 1942-1955, an e-Sword Module].
- 2 John 1.9... **TRANSGRESSETH**—“Transgresseth is *proagō*, ‘to lead forward, to go before,’ in a bad sense, ‘to go further than is right or proper,’ in this context, ‘to go beyond’ the limits of true doctrine” [Kenneth S. Wuest]. |||| “**Whosoever goeth onward** (*pās ho proagōn*). ‘Every one who goes ahead.’ *Proagō* literally means to go on before (Mark 11:9). That in itself is often the thing to do, but here the bad sense comes out by the parallel clause” [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, an e-Sword Module]. |||| “The false teachers evidently considered themselves ‘advanced thinkers,’ progressing beyond the teaching of Christ; but the apostle here denied the pretensions of such men. Whoever advances beyond the New Testament,

has advanced right out of Christianity. ‘Our aim should be not to be advanced, but to abide in the doctrine of Christ.’ [quoted from Leon Morris, DRL]” [Burton Coffman].

- 2 John 1.9... **DOCTRINE OF CHRIST**—Please consider this rather detailed study from Ben S. Flatt: <http://bit.ly/1m1Rrw7>
- 2 John 10... **NEITHER BID HIM GOD SPEED**—“This signifies church approval, or commendation. For a congregation of the Lord's people to extend to false teachers housing, approval and recommendation would be for the church to preside at its own execution” [Coffman]. IIIII “The greeting was CHAIRO! Literally, goodspeed or Godspeed. This greeting was more than mere formality; it was an approval of the course being pursued by the one thus greeting, and included a desire for success in the effort attempted” [Guy N. Woods, “A Commentary on Second John,” p. 349]. IIIII It seems to me that INFLUENCE enters in here in this discussion. If it is perceived by some brother or group of brethren that I am lending support to some false teacher, I have violated the spirit of John’s inspired instruction here. In other words, if they would tend to receive and accept some false teacher based upon the way and manner in which I related to that same teacher, I have done the very thing I should not have done, according to this text.
- 2 John 1.11 ... **PARTAKER OF HIS EVIL DEEDS** —“The passage teaches that we must do nothing that would in any way support or encourage the teaching of that which is not true. To do so is to share in the guilt of the teachers themselves. The principle here taught may not be legitimately extended to include association of hospitality extended to unbelieving relatives, strangers, or even false teachers when in so doing we do not (a) aid them in their work; (b) lend encouragement to their efforts; (c) subject ourselves to the danger of corruption from them. The test is, Does one become a partaker by the action contemplated? If yes, our duty is clear; we must neither receive them nor give them greeting; if No, the principle here taught is not applicable” [Guy N. Woods, p. 350].

V. Lessons & Applications.

- **FOR THE TRUTH’S SAKE, WHICH DWELLETH IN US, AND SHALL BE WITH US FOR EVER** (2 John 2). This great statement should challenge our thinking often, especially at times when we are tempted to avoid the truth. There is no way to escape TRUTH! It will always be. It will be the basis of our judgment on the “last day” (John 12:48). We have a solemn and serious obligation regarding truth: **buy the truth and sell it not** (Proverbs 23:23).
- **WHOSOEVER TRANSGRESSETH** (2 John 1.9). “The King James Version has the word ‘transgresseth’ and the American Standard Version has ‘goeth onward.’ The kind of sin under consideration here is one in which one is progressing beyond the doctrine of Christ; he does not abide in the doctrine of Christ. When division arose in the church over the use of instrumental music in worship, those who used it styled themselves as ‘progressives’ and they stigmatized those who adhered to the original mode of worship -- singing God’s praise unaccompanied (Eph. 5:19) --as ‘non-progressives.’ There is a very definite fitness in these terms. Instrumental music was not commanded by Christ, no apostle ever sanctioned it, no New Testament writer ever authorized it, and no apostolic church ever Practiced it. To use instrumental music in worship is indeed to be “progressive” -- to “progress” beyond the things which are written” [J. Noel Meredith, *Studies in 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John*, Edited by Dub McClish, Denton, TX: Valid Publications, Inc., 1987, p. 154].
- **...NEITHER BID HIM GOD SPEED: FOR HE THAT BIDDETH HIM GOD SPEED IS PARTAKER OF HIS EVIL DEEDS** (2 John 10-11). I fear that many brethren do not take this warning from John as seriously as it needs to be taken. Too many have no qualms about lending support to false teachers and seem to think this is the loving thing to do. False teachers are DANGEROUS because of the fruit they produce. They cause men and women, boys and girls to be lost eternally by believing their false teaching. We should never allow our influence to bring support or comfort to some false teacher. When we do so, we have become guilty of the same evil deeds!

VI. Questions.

True or False

- 01. _____ John said there are many deceivers or antichrists.
- 02. _____ John had no hopes of ever seeing these Christians to whom he was writing.
- 03. _____ John refers to himself as an Apostle of Christ.
- 04. _____ Rejoicing came to John as he learned these Christians were walking in truth.
- 05. _____ Abiding in the doctrine of Christ is essential in order to have fellowship with Christ and God.

I Found it in Verse(s)

- 06. _____ Truth will be with us forever.
- 07. _____ You can be a partaker of evil deeds without teaching false doctrine.
- 08. _____ Love has something to do with walking in the commandments of the Lord.
- 09. _____ Loving one another is a commandment.
- 10. _____ Something about a FULL reward.

Short Answer

- 11. John was not the only one who loved these brethren, there was also all who had _____ the _____ who also loved them.
- 12. One who bids God speed to error is a _____ of the _____ deeds of that one who teaches error.
- 13. Finding those who were walking in truth caused John to rejoice _____.
- 14. Someone coming to a Christian who is not bringing the true doctrine of Christ is to be treated in what two ways? (1) _____;
(2) _____.
- 15. John says to “walk in” what you have heard from _____.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

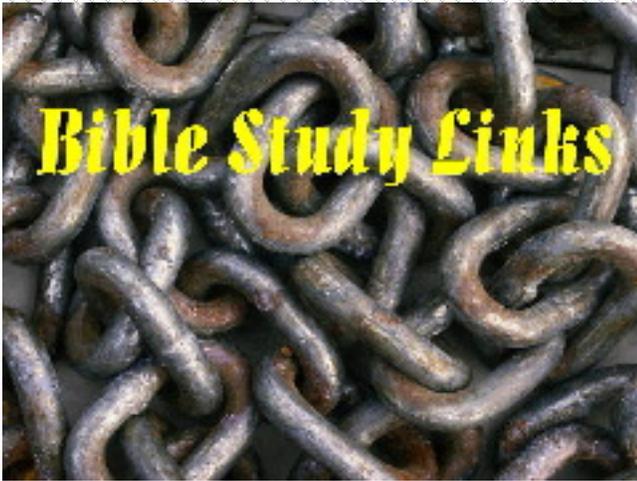
My Score is: _____

ANSWERS to 2 John Questions... **01**—True (7); **02**—False (12); **03**—False (1); **04**—True (4); **05**—True (9); **06**—2; **07**—11; **08**—6; **09**—5; **10**—8; **11**—loved, truth (1); **12**—partaker, evil (11); **13**—greatly (4); **14**—Do not receive into your house; Do not bid God speed (10); **15**—the beginning (6).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL

K	L	B	V	F	K	M	S	P	E	E	D	E
F	C	C	I	N	A	H	A	E	K	A	S	T
S	L	I	O	N	R	T	T	A	K	T	V	H
G	G	W	Y	V	R	E	H	C	B	S	S	T
N	N	R	Y	D	M	D	V	E	J	I	U	E
I	I	F	U	L	L	I	C	I	R	R	S	L
H	N	C	L	A	T	B	O	Y	E	H	E	L
T	N	E	M	D	N	A	M	M	O	C	J	E
U	I	L	R	Y	C	A	E	F	A	C	E	W
R	G	D	E	D	E	N	I	R	T	C	O	D
T	E	E	V	L	L	S	G	Y	G	S	R	V
T	B	R	E	C	E	I	V	E	L	O	V	E
C	Y	C	R	E	M	W	H	A	L	N	A	B
T	T	H	R	E	J	O	I	C	E	D	O	F

ABIDETH	ALSO	BEGINNING	CHILDREN	COMMANDMENT
DECEIVER	DOCTRINE	DWELLETH	ELDER	ELECT
EVER	FACE	FATHER	FULL	GRACE
GREATLY	JESUS	KNOWN	LADY	LORD
LOVE	MANY	MERCY	ONLY	PEACE
RECEIVE	REJOICED	SAKE	SPEED	THINGS
TRUTH				



IX. Links.
for 2 John...

These links are to the writings of men and not to inspired Scripture, thus care and caution in weighing the conclusions is always wise. Some are not really links, but listing of material commonly available in books and publications.

- **Burton Coffman's Commentary on 2 John...**

<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=62&ch=1>

- **Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes on the Whole Bible*, on 2 John...**

<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/view.cgi?bk=62&ch=1>

- **Joseph Benson's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, on 2 John...**

<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/rbc/view.cgi?bk=62&ch=1>

- **Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, on 2 John...**

<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/rwp/view.cgi?bk=62&ch=1>

- **Vincent's Word Studies on 2 John...**

<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/vnt/view.cgi?bk=62&ch=1>

- **Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary, on 2 John...**

<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=62&ch=1>

- Series of 4 mp3 files can be downloaded dealing with 2 John. Kevin Rhodes is the teacher:

<http://www.mediafire.com/?ujamcebg5cu0p#ya3c2ltxryrjs>

- Collection of notes published by Bradley S. Cobb (from notes in his classes at the Bible Institute of Missouri) available, as an e-Sword module, for \$5.00 online at: <http://bit.ly/116wncN>