

LOVE ONE ANOTHER: LIVE THE TRUTH PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: II JOHN

II John 5-6

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BRIEF DESCRIPTION

John writes to a ‘chosen lady’ and her children, all of whom are Christ-followers. He repeats a command from his first letter: “Love one another!” Doing so is to follow God’s commandments. However, this love must not be naïve or merely sentimental. John warns against false teachers who would insinuate their ways and ideas upon the unsuspecting. No, Christians must guard against heresy! They must think critically and have a discerning spirit. They are to have fellowship with God and with one another but not with false teachers. They are intent on deceiving you. Watch out! Don’t even think about welcoming them into your midst.

B. TITLE

- GREEK = **Ιοαννου Β**—Second of John’
- LATIN = **2 Ioannis**

C. PLACE IN BIBLE

- SIXTH OF EIGHT NON-PAULINE EPISTLES
- POPULARLY [BUT INACCURATELY] KNOWN AS ‘CATHOLIC EPISTLES’
 - Because James, I Peter, and II and III John were sent to specific addressees

D. AUTHORSHIP

1. NOWHERE IN THE LETTER IS THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR IDENTIFIED
2. ATTRIBUTION—‘THE ELDER’

Verse 1—*The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth . . .*

3. TRADITIONAL VIEW—JOHN THE APOSTLE
 - a. Late 2nd and early 3rd century fathers Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus affirmed this
 - b. The Muratorian Canon—late 2nd century attributed it to the Apostle John
 - c. Style, vocabulary, structure, themes and mood are similar to the Gospel and I John
 - d. The elder
 - Not just ‘an’ elder of a local congregation
 - But ‘the’ elder—someone of obvious apostolic stature—well known
 - Like Peter—who identified himself as ‘elder’—**I Pe 5:1**

4. CHALLENGES TO JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP

- a. Not widely circulated at first
 - But probable reason—addressed to small, specific group of individuals
- b. Seldom quoted by earliest Fathers
 - But probable reason—few new distinctive ideas not already in **I John**
- c. Disputed canonicity—when fourth century decision was being made
 - **Eusebius** of Caesarea (historian) and **Jerome** said it might have been by another John ‘the Elder’ living in Ephesus
 - But no serious question was raised by the earliest Fathers

E. JOHN THE AUTHOR

- SEE BACKGROUND OF I JOHN

F. SETTING

1. DATE AND LOCATION—CANNOT BE DETERMINED

- Probably from Ephesus—about 90 AD—shortly after **I John**

2. RECIPIENTS

a. Literal view

1. To a specific lady and her children—known by John
2. Some scholars even say her **name** was ‘**Kyria**’—[Greek for ‘lady’—**κυρια**]

b. Figurative view—to a church personified as the ‘elect lady’

1. To a church personified as the ‘elect lady’
 - a. **Clement** of Alexandria (early 3rd cent)—said the personal name ‘**Elekta**’ represented a church
 - b. A later **Syrian** version—said the personal name was ‘**Kyria**’, but it still represented a church
2. Her ‘children’—being members of the church
3. The ‘children of your elect sister’—being members of a sister church

3. FALSE TEACHERS

- a. Do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh—**verse 7**
- b. Those who go ‘to far’ and do not ‘abide in the teaching of Christ’—**verse 9**
- c. Like Cerinthians and Gnostics—see background of **I John**

G. STYLE

1. EPISTOLARY—WITH ONLY A BRIEF GREETING AND CLOSING
2. INTIMATE—PERSONAL
 - a. Addressed to one family or church
 - b. Direct—“**I-you**”—language

H. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. TWO THEMES ARE SIMILAR TO I JOHN
 - a. **Love one another**—**vv1, 3, 5-6**
 - Compare **I John 3:11-24; 4:7-21**
 - b. **Beware of heresy**—false teachers—**vv7-11**
 - Compare **I John 2:18-24; 4:1-6**
2. TWO THEMES ARE SIMILAR TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
 - a. **Walk in the truth**—**vv1-4**
 - Compare **John 8:31-32; 14:16-17**
 - b. **Love one another**—**v1, 3, 5-6**
 - Compare **John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17**
3. THE ONLY BIBLE BOOK WRITTEN TO A WOMAN
4. SECOND SHORTEST BOOK IN BIBLE—[WORD COUNT IN ORIGINAL LANGUAGE]
 - Jude = 461 words
 - Obadiah = 440 words
 - Philemon = 335 words
 - II John = 245 words
 - III John = 219 words

I. THEMES

1. WALK IN TRUTH AND LOVE—**vv1-6**
2. AVOID HERESY AND FALSE TEACHERS—**vv7-11**

J. OUTLINE

FOLLOW GOD’S COMMANDMENTS—**vv 1-6**

Salutation—**vv1-3**

Walk in Truth—**v4**

Walk in Love—**vv 5-6**

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS—**vv7-11**

False Teachers' Heresy—**v7**

Avoid False Teachers—**vv8-11**

CLOSING—**vv12-13**

II. BIBLICAL TEXT

II John 4-6—*4 I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father. 5 Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.*

III. EXPOSITION

A. PARALLEL TEXTS

- **I Jn 2:7-11**
- **Jn 13:34-35**

B. EXPOSITION

Verse 4—WALKING IN THE TRUTH

1. I was very glad = I rejoice greatly—**ἐχάρην λίαν**
 - Unique phrase—found only here and **III Jn 3**
2. Walking 'in truth'
 - a. No definite article—but it can be inferred
 - Walking 'in the truth'—i.e. following the commandments of God
 - b. Or it can describe the **way** of walking—like an adverb
 - Walking in an **authentic** way—consistent with God's commandments
3. **Some** of your children
 - a. Only part of the church is walking in truth
 - b. Suggestion—others already may have fallen under influence of false teachers—**vv7-11**

- c. Some scholars say—this is not a negative statement—but John has only seen some of the members; nothing else in the letter suggests that any of the members were heretical
- 4. Based on the Father’s commandment
 - a. Three possibilities
 - 1. His command at the Transfiguration

Mk 9:7—*This is my Son whom I love; listen to Him.*
 - 2. To obey whatever the Father has passed on to the Son

John 12:50—*Whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say*
 - 3. Generally—equating the whole gospel message with the Father’s command

1 John 3:23—*And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*
 - b. Regardless of interpretation—it points to the **end time**—**kingdom ethic** of the **Father**
 - 1. Revealed by Jesus [see below]—**Jn 10:34**—to love one another
 - 2. A mark of kingdom identity
 - 3. By keeping His commandment
 - People will know you are My disciples
 - And—by extension—children of the Father’s kingdom

Verse 5—THE LOVE COMMANDMENT

- 1. The commandment is—to love one another
- 2. The last one—of six references in John’s letters—to ‘love one another’

1 John 3:11, 23; and 4:7, 11, 12
- 3. Also—closely parallels **I Jn 2:7, 10**
 - a. Both say this is **not a new commandment**—but one **from the beginning**
 - b. Variation—**I Jn 2:10**—says to love ‘his brother’
- 4. Parallels Jn **13:34**
 - a. Both say—to love ‘one another’
 - b. Variation—**Jn 13:34**—says this **is a new commandment** [explained below]
 - Jesus did acknowledge—these disciples *had* been with Him from the beginning—**Jn 15:27**
- 5. Three Non-Johannine parallels

Romans 13:8—1 Thessalonians 4:9—1 Peter 1:22

6. In another sense—this is **not a new commandment**—but from the beginning
 - a. Some argue this means it is the **double-love commandment**
 1. Love God and love your neighbor—from the OT—reiterated by Jesus
 2. Though that commandment is still in effect—**it is not the one meant here**
 - b. Instead—this is the ‘**new commandment**’ of Jesus—**Jn 10:34**
 - Mutual love of Christians
 - A sign of following Jesus—discipleship
 - A sign of being part of the Kingdom of God
 - c. Yet—in another sense—it *is also* ‘from the beginning’
 1. Given by Jesus from the beginning of the kingdom—in His earthly ministry
 2. From the beginning—when these believers first heard the message of the gospel.
 3. But it is **not** ‘new’—in the following sense
 - It does not come from false teachers—who might give a ‘new commandment’
 - Not what is taught by those who go ‘too far’—beyond Christ’s teachings—**v9**

Verse 6—THE CIRCULAR DEFINITION OF LOVE

1. This verse defines what it means to ‘love one another’
2. It is to walk according to His commandments.
3. Parallels Jesus’ correlation between love and obedience

Jn 15:10—*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.*

Jn 15:12—*This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.*

Jn 15:14—*You are My friends if you do what I command you.*

Jn 15:17—*This I command you, that you love one another.*

4. This circular definition then returns to **verse 4**
 - a. To walk in His commandments—is to walk in the truth.
 - b. Therefore:
 - Walking in the truth is to obey the commandment from the Father
 - This commandment from the beginning is to love one another
 - To love—is to keep His commandments—i.e. walk in the truth.

5. Closing of verse: this is the commandment you have heard from the beginning—that you should walk in **it**
 - a. **It**—is a feminine pronoun
 - b. Could refer to the feminine noun—‘love’—**αγαπη**
 - c. Or the feminine noun—‘truth’—**αληθεια**
 - d. Or the closest antecedent—feminine noun—commandment—**εντολη**
 - e. Or—could be *intentionally* vague—letting us infer **any/all**
 - Walk in the **commandment—truth—love**

IV. APPLICATION

1. TRUTH IS NOT JUST ORTHODOXY—BUT AUTHENTICITY

- a. We don’t just *know* the truth—we *live* it
- b. One important way to do this—is to *love* one another
- c. We show we love God—by obeying His commandments
- d. We obey His commandments—by loving one another
- e. How does our ‘truth’ line up with our ‘actions’?
 - Does what we **do**—match our **doctrine**?
 - Is our **behavior**—consistent with our **belief**?
 - Is our **conduct**—in line with our **confession**?

2. MAINTAIN UNITY OF THE BODY

- a. This unity is **bound together** by two things
 1. All of us **walking in truth**—following true doctrine
 2. All of us **loving one another**—keeping His true commandments
- b. Unity is **maintained** by two things
 1. Holding to sound **doctrine**
 2. Maintaining **αγαπη fellowship**
 - Seeking forgiveness when we wrong another
 - Forgiving those who have wronged us

3. LOVE IN A DISCRIMINATING AND ACCOUNTABLE WAY

- a. God’s love is forgiving—but it is also jealous—and *not* permissive

- b. Love does not mean—tolerating heresy that violates God’s truth
- c. Loving one another also means
 - 1. Holding each other accountable
 - 2. Protecting one another from false teaching
 - One of the main responsibilities of pastors—as shepherds—is to protect the flock!
- d. Opposing false teaching—is a matter of both **truth and love**

Eph 4:14-16—*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

- e. II John means the same thing—but says it differently—**walking the truth in love**

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