

THE EPISTLE OF II JOHN

TEXT: II JOHN 1-13

INTRODUCTION:

1. Second John is the smallest book in the Bible.
2. There are many similarities with I John, and there are some differences as well.
3. For example, I John was written to Christians at large, and II John is addressed to "the elect lady and her children" (vs. 1).
4. Second John is addressed by "the elder" (cf. III John 1) "unto the elect lady and her children" (vs. 1).
5. Second John is the only book in the Bible addressed to a lady.
6. The word "elder" means pastor, and is used interchangeably with the word "bishop" (cf. Titus 1:5-7).
7. This epistle was probably written around the same time as I & III John -- about AD 90 (cf. *Scofield Study Bible*).
8. "Truth" is the key word, found five times in the first four verses (vss. 1, 2, 3, 4; cf. Scofield introduction).
9. There is a sharp contrast between truth and error (cf. vs. 7). In I John 1:6, John said, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

I. WALKING IN THE TRUTH (vs. 4)

1. Some take it that the elect lady refers to a Christian congregation, and "her children" (vs. 1) are the members of the congregation, but this is unlikely.
2. There is no reason not to interpret this literally. The "elect lady" was probably some unnamed Christian lady with Christian children (vs. 4).
3. She also had a Christian sister with children (vs. 13). Apparently her sister's children also were walking in truth, since they sent greetings.
4. Some say Christians should put aside truth, for the sake of love, but "truth and love" (vs. 3) are inseparable.
5. Love that is not based on truth is not genuine love.
6. In addition to truth and love, John's salutation includes grace, mercy, and peace (vs. 3).
7. The phrase, "Grace be with you" (vs. 3) is found in Colossians 4:18; II Timothy 4:22; Titus 3:15; and Hebrews 13:25. "Grace" refers to God's loving-kindness and favour.
8. "Mercy" refers to God's kindness and good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with His desire to help them.

9. A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. "But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy." "But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied. "Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for." "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son.

10. In Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, Portia says to Shylock,
The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

11. Love is a commandment, not merely an emotion (vs. 5).

12. Ephesians 5:25 is a command -- "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

13. Colossians 3:19 is a command -- "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

14. Ephesians 5:25 and Colossians 3:19 are commandments for husbands. Second John 5 is a commandment for all Christians.

15. John frequently refers to "the beginning" (vss. 5 and 6; cf. I John 1:1; 2:13, 14, 24; 3:11). The Gnostics promoted new and strange teachings, but John pointed Christians back to "the beginning."
16. H.A. Ironside said, "That which is new and not from the beginning is but a deceit and a delusion."
17. The commandment to love (vss. 5, 6) appears often in John's epistles and in the Gospel of John (cf. I John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12).
18. Our Lord said in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."
19. Our Lord said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
20. First John 5:2, 3 says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
21. Just as there is a reciprocal relationship between truth and love (II John 3b), there is a reciprocal relationship between love and obedience.

II. SEPARATING FROM THOSE WHO DENY THE TRUTH

1. In John's first epistle we saw a sharp contrast between the children of God and the children of the devil (I John 3:10). Here in his second epistle, he points out that the children of God know the truth and obey the truth, but the children of the devil are deceivers who deny the truth (vs. 7).
2. Deceivers do not deny that Jesus was born. They deny "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (vs. 7).
3. The teachings of antichrist include the denial of Christ's pre-existence and incarnation. For example, all of the cults deny the deity of Jesus Christ.
4. Some would say the Seventh-Day Adventists are an exception because they affirm the deity of Christ, but the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) cult is a mish-mash of error and contradiction.

5. For example, just like the Jehovah's Witness cult, they teach that Jesus and Michael the archangel are the same person. This is not taught in Scripture.
6. Michael, and all of the other angels, were created by God. But John 1:3 says, "All things were made by him (Christ -- "the Word"); and without him was not any thing made that was made."
7. John 1:10 says, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."
8. Colossians 1:16 says, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."
9. In 1994, the SDA published a paraphrase translation called the *Clear Word Bible*. It is not the Bible, but a misleading, inaccurate paraphrase, intended to deceive.
10. This is how they translate Jude 9, "In contrast to these ungodly men is the Lord Jesus Christ, also called Michael, the archangel in charge of the entire angelic host. When He was challenged by Satan about His intentions to resurrect Moses, He didn't come against Satan with a blistering attack nor did he belittle him. He simply said, 'God rejects your claim to his body.'"
11. KJV: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."
12. The phrase, "also called Michael, the archangel in charge of the entire angelic host," was inserted but is not in the original Greek text.
13. Another SDA error is their strange "Investigative Judgment" doctrine, whereby they claim that Christ's work of redemption wasn't completed on the cross.

14. John 19:30 says, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."
15. The Gnostics were antichrist (II John 7), and confessed not "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." They believed that Jesus was some type of phantom. They denied that "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14).
16. Second Corinthians 5:19 says, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."
17. First Timothy 3:16 says, "God was manifest in the flesh."
18. These false teachers are deceivers and antichrist. John says there are "many" (II John 7).
19. Religious deception is antichrist and it is satanic. Revelation 12:9 says, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."
20. There are many references to his deception in the book of Revelation (cf. 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:3, 8, 10).
21. As we get closer to the return of Christ, this satanic deception will get worse. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13).
22. Christians should be alert and vigilant. Our Lord has told us to "Watch and pray" (Mark 13:33).
23. "Look to yourselves" (II John 8) means we are to be careful, not careless. John is speaking here of losing our reward, not our salvation (cf. I John 2:28).
24. False teachers are "transgressors" (II John 9). This means they have "crossed the line" between right and wrong, and truth and error, and salvation and damnation.
25. These transgressors are on the wrong side. They are on Satan's side, not God's side. They "abide

not in the doctrine of Christ" and they "have not God" (vs. 9).

26. The "doctrine of Christ" (vs. 9) is vitally important. If a person is wrong on this doctrine, he is lost and on his way to hell (cf. I John 2:22, 23).
27. We should not welcome these false teachers into our house (vss. 10, 11). On the basis of these Scriptures, many Christians have refused to invite Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons into their homes.
28. Others say it is good to invite them in, in order to give them the true Gospel and try to win them to Christ.
29. We should take into consideration whether or not the person is a promoter of error or some mixed-up lost soul who has been deceived by error. There is a difference. John is warning of false teachers.
30. Second Peter 2:1 says, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

III. FELLOWSHIPING WITH THOSE WHO EMBRACE THE TRUTH

1. After the strong warning about avoiding deceivers, John speaks happily of seeing "the elect lady and her children" "face to face" (verse 12; cf. III John 14).
2. Second John and III John have similar endings (cf. III John 13, 14).

CONCLUSION:

Regarding the Gnostics, G. Campbell Morgan said, "They were persons who claimed to be leaders; they were advanced thinkers, they were progressive. The Gnostic teachers of the time were claiming that while the Gospel of the historic Jesus might be all very well for unenlightened people, they had a profounder knowledge. Such were to receive no hospitality."