

2 JOHN:

Overview, Observations & Conclusion

INTRO: It was not my plan to give a message on 2 John, but Daryl brought up the possibility as he did the third of three exegetical messages on this book by our pastoral students. This left the last two verses, the conclusion of the letter. I was also asked if I would grade those messages. I do not feel I am a Homiletics teacher, but I do have some understanding of the basics of the various sorts of messages, such as topical, textual and exegetical, which most would call expository. And so I planned to go over their message notes and make some recommendations and give a grade. And after Daryl's suggestion I thought, "Well, I'll be spending a lot of time doing this, I think I'll take on doing that message Daryl suggested.

So, here is what I plan to do in this message. I want to give an overview of the book. Then I want to make some observations that I made as I listened to their messages and went over their notes. Then I want to give the conclusion of this letter in verses 12-13.

In our classes we spent a lot of time doing the grammatical work required to do exegetical preaching. In exegetical preaching, you set out the Biblical words you will be preaching on in a grammatical form in which you have to give account for the function of every word in the passage you are dealing with. Then from that you determine the major sections of your chosen material. Then you subject everything to those major points by showing how those sections modify the main points. From that, you then develop an outline. Once that is done, then come the word studies and checking with commentaries or historical information etc...

So, in the first point this morning I want to give you an overview of what we found.

I. OVERVIEW

So, let us go to the overview. If you look at verses 1-3, it is easy to see that we have introductory material (read). It is the nice stuff that introduces a letter. Trent did a good job of covering the word *elder*, the *lady*,

and the *children*. My conclusions on these were in agreement with his.

So, as we outlined the book in class, verses 4-11 form the body of the letter. So, the outline of the book thus far is, first in verses 1-3 we have the introduction. The second part is the main body of the letter, and that is verses 4-11. The third and last part is verses 12-13 (read). This is the conclusion.

Those then, are the main parts. But the body of the letter, being the main part, has two larger sections. Joe took the first part of that, which is verses 4-6, and Daryl took the second part, which is verses 7-11. As I see the subject content, verses 4-6 deal with John's main concern and give his instruction to them. I see this instruction, the great concern John had that couldn't wait. And verses 7-11 give us the issue that was threatening the continued love in the Church.

As I see the letter, John has written because of an urgent concern. He had planned to visit the recipients of the letter, whoever they were, but what concerned him could not wait until he came. I suspect someone from where John was, was going to those he is writing to or he sent someone, and he gets this letter on the way with this urgent concern. So, to soften the blow of his concern, he starts with the positive. It is like saying, "Now son, you did a good job of that, but..." So look at verse 4, "I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father." And now look at the next words, "And now I plead with you..." "Some of you are doing well, but..."

So, having first built them up enough so they can handle what he is concerned about and we find that in verses 4-6 (read). Note especially verse 5, "And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another." And here is, as I see it, the central reason why John wrote this letter. The love among the members of this church was being threatened. You see, things can happen in a congregation that threatens the love between the members,

and that is the case here. Since the men did a good job of the word love, and what it means, I will leave that.

So there was something that threatened the love in that church. We find what that was in verses 7-11. Daryl noted for us the connection between verses 7-11 by the little preposition 'for' which begins verse 7. And in my outline I call this second section, verses 7-11, "The reason for this instruction." Here John warns them about being deceived, and about receiving deceivers into their homes. And Daryl gave fair warning here about the present danger of dialogue between camps divided by major doctrines.

As we noted earlier, verses 12-13 then give the conclusion to the letter like this: "Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen."

So, what we have is an introduction to the letter, the main body made up of two parts, and the conclusion. Now let me make a few observations from what has already been covered in the previous three messages.

II. OBSERVATIONS

In the introductory verses Trent mentioned the 'Lady' of verse 1. I have often wondered why the Church is called 'The Church'. You see, the word 'Church' comes from the word, 'Kuriakos'. That word is never used for the 'Church' in the NT. The word *kuriakos* is an adjective which comes from the word 'Lord'. The word 'Lord' is *kurios*. For example, when we say Jesus is the Lord, the word Lord is *kurios*. The adjective *kuriakos* is used twice in the NT and neither refers to the Church.

Now the one to whom this letter is addressed is called 'kuria'. That is feminine for 'kurios'. Is it possible that Christians got the idea of the word *Church* from this word? I don't know, but I don't know anything that comes closer to explaining why the Church is called the Church. If we took the more biblical description, the Church is called the *ekklasia*, which means the called out ones, or the

Elect, if you like. The most biblical name for that which we call the Church, in my understanding would be, "The Elect." Can you imagine calling the Church 'the elect' in our day of tolerance?

We note as well that the word 'truth' is found five times in the first 4 verses. John rejoiced that he found some, and I believe, as Trent concluded from his studies, that John is speaking to a church, and he found some walking in truth. Think about that. He rejoices that some are walking in truth. How many professing believers in churches do not walk in truth? John rejoiced to find 'some' walking in truth. This is worth noting. The danger of this church was deceivers, and deceivers cause people to walk in untruth.

Let me make another observation. In verse 3 John says, "Grace, mercy and peace will be with you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and love. Trent mentioned that having grace, mercy and peace abiding in us is conditional. It is conditioned on walking in truth and love. This is a very important point.

Now look at verses 5-6 (read). Here is the core of the book. These two verses, as I see the book, give the reason why John could not wait with sharing the concern he had for whomever he was writing to until he was there. The whole reason is in these words, "...that we should love one another." It was pointed out in earlier messages that what we take as love today, generally, is not what this word agapee, which our text uses, is about at all.

So note how carefully John defines what he means by agapee love in verse 6 (read). What is love, biblical love? Walking in the Lord's commandments! Not commandment, but commandments! This includes such things as reproofing one another, when it is truly in order. It includes such things as excommunication when it is in order. Those are the commandments of the Lord! You see, when a professing Christian lives in sin, that sin is to be dealt with. And what does that do? It tears the love relationship between believers, but preserves the main group.

Now let us note what it was that threatened the love relationships within this church. Note it now, beginning in verse 7, "For..." There is the critical word. He will give the reason now, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." The danger that threatened the love relationship between believers in this church was false teaching regarding the person of Christ. From what I have read, the danger of the first three centuries of the Church was Gnosticism. It was a teaching as nasty as the NAM today. Contemplative prayer in the modern church has some of the same flavor as Gnosticism. The emergent church has this as well.

Well, what affects the love between Christians in a Church has always had a vast array of things that threaten it? Anything false is a threat to the love between Christians in a Church.

The central thought of this little letter has direct application to us. Let me refer to our own experience just a short time ago. Multiple lies were told. Lying is no minor problem to be overlooked, or fore bourn. It is in the major sin list. It is contrary to major commandments. How can you walk in love in a group when that is present? If one does, one becomes a hypocrite.

Secondly, there was strife. James 4:16 says, "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there." Both were present in our group. Now the word translated 'self-seeking' is *erithia*. The Online Bible says it has the idea of, "electioneering or intriguing for office." Then it says, "...apparently, in the NT a courting distinction, a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and fractious spirit which does not disdain low arts..." Low arts were most certainly there.

The idea is when people in a group, go to others within the group and form a division against the whole. It is referred to in the Online Bible as the means of politicking. Now, you cannot walk in true love when that is present. Those are enemies of love in a church. Then there were absolute, clear, violations of agreements made in written form. Can

you walk in love in a group when that is there? If you do, that must needs involve hypocrisy. You see, the writer of this little book is so concerned about this, that he sent the letter as early as possible. This could not wait until he came to them. We get some idea then of his grave concern.

Now, four times the word love occurs in this letter. Those were in Trent and Joe's sections and they did a good job of covering the word *love*. They mentioned that the word *agapee* does not mean what we normally take it to mean. Certainly all thought of sensual love as is so common in modern choruses and expressions, is a thought that is very far from that of this word. But consider this well, now: a church cannot walk together in love, true love, if their fellowship is not based in truth. A church can walk in unity, without truth, but they cannot walk in true love unless it is based on truth.

In our own situation, we ended up leaving a property and buildings paid for, paid for to a large percentage by the people who are here. Disunity was created by offended people who had not stood for truth as they ought to have and were reprov'd. Disunity was created by lies. I have in my life not seen more blatant sin in a church. Now let me ask you, can you walk in love in a church when you have lies and offenses because of reproof on that which needed reproof and violations in written agreements? It is not possible. If one puts on an act of walking in love, and love meaning 'get-alongism' as one of our folk has called it, when in a situation like that, that is not love, that is hypocrisy. Oh, how this little book speaks to such situations.

Let me just mention one other a matter, while we are at it here, that thought it has a lot of truth to it, when abused, creates huge hypocrisy in the Church. It is this saying: Unity in diversity. I won't expand much. I say this so that when you come across this you will already be warned to watch that teaching with utmost care. There is a unity to be maintained in the midst of diversity that is good and right. But there is a unity in diversity that is

dangerous and even deadly and one must not get involved with it. And Daryl mentioned the danger of dialogue with those of diverse views such as Evangelicals and Catholics, or Mormons in dialogue.

So, the main focus of this little book is that the love between the members of whomever John was writing to is threatened. The threat in this case was false teaching. And when you maintain unity to avoid trouble at the expense of truth, hypocrisy will rule the camp.

III. CONCLUSION

We come then to the conclusion to this little letter in verses 12-13 (read). In this conclusion he indicates first of all that he has a desire, and secondly, he sends greetings to the elect lady from her elect sister. So we begin with John's desire. Note it in verse 12 (read). Let me sum it up like this. He had many things he wanted to communicate to them. But he did not wish to do so by pen and ink, but he wanted to do this face to face.

This tells me that his instruction to them to love one another, and to not let sin enter to destroy the possibility of love to continue was a very large concern to him. It could not wait. But there were things that could wait, and these he left so that he could communicate that in person when he got there.

A. John's Desire

1. The context

So note now the context in which he expresses his desire. He says, "Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink..." Like a typical preacher he never runs out of things he wants to communicate. Now you see, this is John, the Apostle. He is the disciple, as was said in the previous messages, who wrote five Bible books, the book of Revelation being the last and the Gospel of John, the first.

Tradition says he was dipped in oil as a way of persecuting him. John was also in the inner circle of Jesus three closest friends, and of those three, he was the closest. By the time John wrote this book he is an aged man, and no doubt, what he has to say would not soon run out. And seeing the dangers the recipients of this letter are in, he has great concerns for them as well as wanting to communicate important spiritual truths to them. And so these words form the context in which he expresses his desire, "Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink..."

2. The content

a. Negatively

We look then at the content of his desire, and first, negatively. He said, "I did not wish to do so with paper and ink." He wanted to communicate with them, but he did not want to do so with paper and ink. Have you ever thought of how incredible communicating with paper and ink is? Think of John. I don't know where he was when he wrote this letter. But where ever he was, he was not within range of being able to communicate his concern with these people he was concerned about other than by writing.

Now you see, he did not really have paper. Does anyone know where we got the word 'paper' from? It comes from the word Papyrus. Papyrus was a plant found in the Nile Delta. Thin strips from the center pith of the Papyrus stalk were cut and laid side by side with another series of strips laid perpendicular to lower strips. Usually the sheets were 6"x9" or 12"x15" inches. These sheets were pasted together into rolls of 20 sheets.

Papyrus was used long before the time of Christ and was used up until the 3rd century after Christ. A role was called a biblos. We get the word 'book' from that, as well as the word 'Bible'.

Papyrus was not nearly as durable as leather, called Parchment, but I would suppose less work to make and cheaper. Also the writing on them was not nearly as good as the writing on leather. Many of the old Manuscripts of the NT are papyrus manuscripts or parts of manuscripts.

Now John says he did not wish to write with paper and ink. But what of a pen? Or what did he write with? Well, look at third John 13 (read). Here he mentions the pen. They had two kinds of writing instruments, a reed pen, and a quill pen. The quill pen was made of a feather, and you will all have seen pictures of these. The reed pen was made from a reed stalk with a brush attached to the end. Now the word John uses for pen here is a *kalamos*, and from that we know that he wrote with a reed pen. The brush was dipped in ink. Now, how many of you have seen those old school desks with a hole near the front of the desk? How many of you know what that hole was for? It held an ink bottle.

You may not believe this, but when I started school, that is what we used. And when you got too much ink in one spot on our page, or if you dripped some by accident, you had, what was called a blotter, and you used it to soak up the extra ink. You cannot imagine what an invention a ball point pen was! Well, John says, "I did not wish to do so with paper and ink."

All of this is a forerunner to what we do on computers and cell phones today. I wonder what John would have said if he would have seen a vision of what lay in the future? But, you see, the only thing that has changed in all of earth's history, is what we write on, and the way we send it. John would have sent his letter with someone. We press 'send.' I wish I had time to tell you what incredible things words are.

b. Positively

But note now how he expresses his wish positively, "Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face..." Now it is simply amazing how different it can be to speak face to face from communicating by letter or by text or such like. There are times when a letter is better. In a letter, especially if you keep a copy, it cannot later be argued what was said. There are times when that is best.

There are times, in hindsight, when I should have recorded what was said, or had somebody with me. In our last church problem a man expressed himself in such dishonorable ways to me he should have been excommunicated. Instead, things were made so miserable that I left and what did that church do? They set that man up as their pastor. It is hard to believe this could happen. Here is a word to those who will be in ministry. Never take for granted that you will be believed. Never counsel a lady alone. A few untrue words from her can ruin you even when there is no truth to the words. Never sit with an angry man and talk without someone to verify what was said. His talk can ruin you though what he says may all be lies.

Furthermore, there are times when communicating face to face is better. When you need to repent to someone, unless it is not very well possible otherwise, do it face to face; not by text or letter or phone call. Now you see, John had things he wanted to communicate face to face. So he did not write those things.

But let me make another note about writing. Consider this for a moment. In a message soon, I want to talk about this some more. God cannot do what John wished to do here. God cannot speak to us face to face. Do you know why not? Well, there is a very good reason, and you may wish to think about that before we consider it in another message.

But for God to save man, He needed to communicate some divine truths that man had to have in order to be saved. He could not do it face to face. Have you ever considered what He did use and what He might have used? Harold Willmington, a teacher my wife and I took many correspondence courses from suggested that God could have used, angels, or visions and dreams. Think about that, what if God spoke to each person by angels or visions and dreams. Or He might have used the Urim and Thummim of the OT. Or say, the moral law written on the heart along with all other instructions; or the conscience. Or an audible voice, or prophets. He could have continued to send prophets.

But what did God choose to use? The method we still use in one form or another, and has been used right from the very beginning. A method that will never change. He chose a method of signs, letters; put together to form words, put together to form sentences, put together to form paragraph, put together to form chapters, put together to form books, put together to form the Bible. You have to ponder this. It is most incredible. God communicated to us in the most reliable manner possible

And do you know what this method insured? It insured precision of what God communicated. Then it provided the most reliable way of accurate propagation of God's message. And then it provided the most reliable way of preserving God's message.

Now consider what we have today because God communicated on paper by having holy men of God put on some writing material His words with pen and ink!

2. The purpose

So, having looked at the context and the content of John's desire, consider the purpose. John says, "Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full." Now consider this. By way of communicating verbally, one person can

cause joy in the other person, and when there is mutual joy, joy is filled up. What a gift God has given to us in speech! And to those who will be preachers, you will never get over the wonder of the Word of God! You can communicate thousands of messages, and when you have done that, you will have multiplied the possibility of thousands more. You never use these words up, they multiply! You do not run out when you study and communicate the Word of God, you multiply what you have.

I have been encouraged by each of these young men, in their messages on this little book. I rejoice in one thing more than all others. I did not fear that they had not done their own thinking. I have taught a few, when I got their assignments, I got a very uneasy feeling that they were copying somebody else in some areas. It is extremely hard to catch one who plagiarizes, but let me say this, plagiarism is a huge sin for a preacher. Do not pass off as your own what you got from another without giving credit to the source. That is stealing. It is stealing someone else's thoughts and passing them off as your own. There is a word to any would be preacher.

C. John's Greetings

Well, that brings us to John's closing greetings in the letter. John closes like this, "The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen." You see, he wrote to the elect lady and to her children. If referring to a church by calling her the elect lady is a way of hiding the identity of the church in case the letter gets into the wrong hands, then in the same way, saying, "The children of your elect sister greet you" is a way of hiding the church that sends her greetings as well. That may give one clue to the date of the writing of this book.

Turn to Revelation 22. It is sometimes viewed that 1, 2, and 3 John were written after the book of Revelation, and we have no way of knowing for certain. The Mormons use that to show that Revelation 22:18-19 apply only to the book of Revelation (read). Here is how they argue. Since John's

epistles were written after the book of Revelation, what it says in these verses must only apply to the book of Revelation since other books were added later. Therefore this conclusion: Adding the Book of Mormon to the Bible does not violate this passage.

Though I would disagree with that at any rate, I think the epistles of John were written before the book of Revelation. There were 9 Roman rulers in the Flavian Dynasty. The first four were bad and the last five good. The last bad one was Domitian who ruled from 81-96 AD. If John addressed a church as the elect lady, and he speaks of the elect's ladies sister and her children sending greetings to her, it would seem to me that these letters were written prior to the book of Revelation in the time of heavy persecution for believers.

Well, the last word of this little book is 'Amen'. In Deuteronomy 27 a number of verses end with the word, 'Amen'. For example, verse 16 says, 'Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!' Do you know what that means? It is like saying, "That is true!" Or, "Truly!", or "So be it!" It is an affirmation of truth. And so John's second letter closes.

CONCL: And so, we have looked at the three sections of 2 John. The introduction in verses 1-3. The main body of the letter in verses 4-11, and the conclusion in verses 12-13. The main point of the letter is to seek to keep the love in the church intact. And the threat to this love is false teaching. Now, that was the particular threat in that church. Everything false, all sin that enters a church is a threat to love.

I cannot see how love between members can continue when sin of any size enters the church and is not dealt with. I know there is such a thing as forbearance. Not every little matter should become an excommunication matter. But when sin enters to any size and it is not dealt with, what continues in that church is not love. And if there is unity, it is a sign of total infection. And when sin enters and one knows it and one practice get-alongism, hypocrisy reigns.

May I say to this church, to each member, guard your life. Sin does not live alone. No man lives to himself and no man dies to himself. And may the Lord protect us. Walk in truth and love. And that can only be done if sin is kept out.