

Walking in Truth

Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher

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INTRODUCTION

1. Back in 2016, we did a study on the Apostle John's first letter
2. Today I want us to begin a look at his second and third letter
3. Both letters appear after the first one toward the end of the NT
4. 2 John has 13 verses and 3 John has 15
5. Both letters are written to individuals in the church rather than an entire church
6. We have other letters in the NT that are written to individuals like Timothy, Titus and Philemon
7. I would like to begin our study by reading the entire letter
8. Like I said, it only has 13 verses, so it's not very long
9. Read 2 John
10. As we read there were several words that stood out to us
11. The first one was the word "truth"
12. It occurred 5 times in the first four verses
13. The second word was "love" which was used 2 times in verses 5-6
14. The rest of the book was a warning against those who "do not acknowledge Jesus as coming in the flesh" (v.7) or "does not abide in the teaching of Christ" (v.9)
15. The Bible has a lot to say about "truth"
 - a. God is the God of truth - [Deuteronomy 32:4](#), says, God is "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of truth and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He." (NKJV)
 - b. Christ said He is the truth ([John 14:6](#))
 - c. The apostle John said Jesus was "full of truth" ([John 1:14](#))
 - d. When He spoke, He spoke the truth
 - e. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth in [John 14:17](#).

- f. [Ephesians 5:9](#), “(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth)”
 - g. The Bible is called, in [Daniel 10:21](#), the writing of truth
 - h. Jesus said in [John 17:17](#), “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”
 - i. Everything the Bible says about God is truth
 - j. We are saved by the truth
 - k. We are sanctified by the truth
 - l. We love the truth
 - m. We are judged by the truth
 - n. We are set free by the truth
 - o. We worship in the truth
 - p. We serve God in the truth
 - q. We rejoice in the truth
 - r. We speak the truth
 - s. We think on the truth
 - t. We desire the truth
 - u. We manifest the truth
 - v. We hear the truth
 - w. We obey the truth
 - x. We walk in the truth - that means we conduct our lives in the realm of the truth
 - y. The truth determines how we think, how we speak, and how we act
 - z. We live in a world that doesn't want to recognize the truth
 - aa. They follow lies from the father of lies, Satan
16. 2 John is also a letter about the truth
17. It is also a letter of warning against those who deny the truth
18. This letter, like 1 John, was written “concerning those who are trying to deceive you” ([1 John 2:26](#))
19. John refers to them as “deceivers” who have “gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist” ([2 John 1:7](#))

20. They do not “abide in the teaching of Christ” ([2 John 1:9](#)) nor do they “have God”
21. This is the group known as the gnostics
22. That word comes from the Greek word gnosis, which means, “to know” and was a group of people who believed they had a superior, private knowledge over and above that of the Bible” (Wuest)
23. There were two groups of gnostics: the Docetic gnostics and the Cerinthian gnostics
24. The Docetic gnostics denied the humanity of Christ while the Cerinthian gnostics made a distinction between the man Jesus and the aeon Christ that came on Him at His baptism and left Him when He was on the cross.
25. All three letters address a problem with either the gnostics or with an individual (Diotrephes)
26. 2nd and 3rd John also addresses’ hospitality, that is, providing lodging and support for itinerate preachers and evangelists
27. We will see that as we get deeper into the two letters
28. John says that everyone who has the truth loves
29. He loves God and all those who are walking in truth and he loves his enemies
30. John’s letter begins and follows the structure of letters of that time period
31. It has a salutation in verses 1-3, a charge in verses 4-6, a warning in verses 7-11, and it closes with his desire to come and see them (vv.12-13)
32. John begins with the salutation, which includes the writer, readers, and greeting

· Notice first...

LESSON

I. The Writer (v.1a)

“The elder”

a. The writer is identified as “the elder”

i. This is the same identification as in [3 John 1:1](#).

ii. This is the Greek word presbyteros which here refers to both age and an official position in the church

iii. John was the last of the living apostles

iv. He was also “the elder” (definite article is used) of the church

v. We saw in our study of [1 Peter 5](#) that the word “elder” is used interchangeably with “overseer” and “pastor” and is used to refer to the leadership in the church

vi. The same is true here

› John has never given himself any attention as the author of his letters

› He never gave his name in the Gospel of John, or in 1, 2, 3, John. Revelation is the only book where he gives his name but he is...

b. The Apostle John is traditionally identified as the author of the Gospel of John and all three epistles

i. He is the one who confessed to be “the disciple whom Jesus loved” ([Jn.20:2](#); [13:23](#); [19:26](#); [21:7](#), [20](#)) 5 times in the Gospel of John

ii. From the first century until...the end of the eighteenth century, the church consistently identified the apostle John as the author of 1 John (MacArthur)

iii. Irenaeus, who was a disciple of Polycarp (Polycarp was a disciple of John) lived from 130 - 202 A.D., was the first writer to quote directly from 1 John and name the apostle John as its author (MacArthur)

iv. He also alluded to 2 John and assumed apostolic authorship (Wallace)

v. The Muratorian Fragment, which is an ancient list of NT books—the oldest such list we have found (gotquestions.org/Muratorian-Canon), mentions two letters by John, the second of which could have either been 2 John or 2-3 John (the two forming one letter) (Wallace)

vi. Clement of Alexandria who lived from 150 - 215 A.D. recognized more than one letter by John (Wallace)

vii. Origen, who was a student of Clement of Alexandria and lived from 185 - 253 A.D., recognized both 2 and 3 John (Wallace)

viii. Dionysius of Alexandria, who was a student of Origen and lived from 200 - 265 A.D., mentions John’s second and third letter (Wallace)

ix. So the early church fathers recognized the apostle John as the author of all three epistles

x. All three epistles were written around the same time, 90-95 A.D., from Ephesus

· John gives next...

II. The Readers (vv.1b-2)

“to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth, for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever”

He identifies his audience by three terms:

a. They are the “Chosen” (v.1b)

- i. This is the Greek word *eklektos*, adj
- ii. This word occurs 22 times in the NT
- iii. It means to be “chosen out” or “selected” and “describes those selected by God for eternal glory” whether Christ ([Lk.23:35](#)), the holy angels ([1 Tim.5:21](#)), or the redeemed ([Mat.22:14](#))
- iv. The only other time it is used outside this epistle for an individual is in [Romans 16:13](#) where Paul described Rufus as a “choice man in the Lord”
- v. John’s description reflects the biblical truth that God sovereignly chooses believers for salvation (MacArthur)
- vi. So when it is used in the NT, it refers to a recipient of special privilege (Mounce)

A.W. Pink says, “God is not working at random: the gospel has been sent forth on no uncertain mission: the final outcome in the conflict between good and evil has not been left indeterminate; how many are to be saved or lost depends not on the will of the creature. Everything was infallibly determined and immutably fixed by God from the beginning, and all that happens in time is but the accomplishment of what was ordained in eternity.”

So “Let it be plainly announced that salvation originated not in the will of man, but in the will of God (see [John 1:13](#); [Rom. 9:16](#)), that were it not so none would or could be saved—for as the result of the fall man has lost all desire and will unto that which is good ([John 5:40](#); [Rom. 3:11](#))—and that even the elect themselves have to be made willing ([Ps. 110:3](#)), and loud will be the cries of indignation raised against such teaching” (The Doctrine of Election).

- vii. The word then...indicates God’s prerogative in deciding what shall happen, independently of human choice” (Logos Factbook)
- viii. Jesus used the verb form (*eklegomai*) in [John 15:16](#), “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”

b. This is the “Lady” (v.1b)

- i. There has been considerable debate whether “elect lady” should be taken literally of an individual, or figuratively of a particular Johannine church (AYBD)
- ii. Many commentators believe the phrase “the chosen lady” (v. 1) refers metaphorically to a local church

- iii. The more natural understanding in the context, however, is to take it as a reference to an actual woman and her children, whom John knew personally (MacArthur)
- iv. The term “lady” is the feminine form of the noun kurios (“lord,” “sir”)
- v. Some take the term “lady,” as her personal name (Hiebert)
- vi. It would be kyria
- vii. This name could be the Greek equivalent to the Aramaic name Martha (both mean “lady”) (MacDonald)
- viii. Because her husband is not mentioned, she was probably an unnamed widow

› The greeting...

- c. It includes “her children” (v.1c) that is a reference to the children of the elect lady not the church

› John says about her children...

- i. “Whom I love in truth”
 - 1. “love” (agape, pres.act.ind.), is a willful, sacrificial love that is devoted. It is also the love the Father has for Christ and His children
 - 2. “I (ego) is emphatic, stressing John’s personal, ongoing love for them (MacArthur)
 - 3. “in truth” is a reference to the gospel

› Now he gives a principle regarding love and truth

- ii. “And not only I, but also all who know the truth”
 - 1. All Christians love those who “know the truth” because they are of the truth

› and that truth now...

- iii. “For the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever”
 - 1. Our salvation is eternal
 - 2. You can never be lost again - [John 10:27-28](#), “27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”
 - 3. “We are kept by the power of God for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” ([1 Peter 1:5](#))
 - 4. The gospel “abides in us and will be with us forever”

· John concludes the salutation with...

III. The Greeting (v.3)

“Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love”

The literal rendering is “there will be with us grace, mercy, and peace” (Hiebert)

The future indicative verb “will be” underlines that true believers will continue to experience these blessings (Hiebert)

Lehman Strauss notes that the use of this triple formula here “lends added weight in favor of the argument that John wrote his Second Epistle to an individual and not to the Church”

> Notice...

a. The virtues

i. “Grace” (charis) is the underserved favor to those who deserve the opposite (MacDonald)

1. It views sinners as guilty and undeserving - [Ephesians 1:7](#), “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace”

2. [Romans 1:5](#) says through Christ “we have received grace...”

3. There was grace in the OT

a. Noah “found favor in the eyes of the Lord” ([Gen.6:8](#))

b. Moses found favor in the eyes of the Lord so that He did not judge the idolatrous children of Israel ([Ex.33, 34](#))

c. Grace was a major theme in Israel’s worship

i. [Psalm 86:15](#), “But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.”

ii. [Psalm 116:5](#), “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.”

4. The grace of God and of Christ is seen in both the Old and New Testament

a. The Father is called “the God of all grace” ([1 Pet.5:10](#))

b. [Ephesians 1:7](#) speaks of “the riches of His grace”

c. [John 1:14](#) describes Jesus as “full of grace and truth”

d. [2 Thessalonians 1:12](#) links God and Christ in regard to their grace, “the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ”

5. Salvation is seen as an act of grace

a. For both Jews and Gentiles, salvation was a gracious act - [Ephesians 2:8-9](#).

b. Sinners are “being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” ([Rom.3:24](#))

c. Paul tells believers in [Titus 2:11-13](#), “11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus”

6. Grace also involves forgiveness, salvation, regeneration, repentance and the love of God. ‘These are ‘grace-words’ which do not contain the word ‘grace’ ’ (Moffatt)

› **The second virtue is...**

ii. “Mercy” (eleos) is pity shown to those who are guilty and wretched (MacDonald)

1. Mercy then views the sinner as needy and helpless

2. Paul could personally attest to this

3. [1 Timothy 1:12-13](#), “12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;”

4. God grants the sinner mercy

5. There are many synonyms to express the many-sided concept of mercy such as kindness, lovingkindness, goodness, grace, favor, pity, compassion and steadfast love

› **Kenneth Wuest said...**

Wuest’s Word Studies in the Greek New Testament Second John

God so loved the world with a pitying love (therein was the mercy), that He gave His only-begotten Son (herein the grace), that the world through Him might be saved.

iii. “Peace” (eirene) literally means “to bind together” (Wuest)

1. It is the harmonious relationship that results from God’s grace and mercy (MacDonald)

2. Our Lord made peace through the blood of His Cross when He made it possible for a holy God in perfect justice and holiness to bind together a believing sinner and Himself in an indissoluble, living union (Wuest)

The three terms summarize the progression of the plan of salvation: God’s grace caused Him to grant mercy, which results in peace” (MacArthur)

b. The source (dual)

- i. “from God the Father” “with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” He gives “every good thing given and every perfect gift” ([James 1:17](#))
- ii. “and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love”
 1. [2 Corinthians 1:20](#), “For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.”

› James Montgomery Boice writes...

The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary The Introduction (vv. 1–3)

The unique feature of this opening salutation is John’s surprising emphasis on truth and his linking of the truth he thus emphasizes to love. Indeed, the word “truth” occurs four times in these first three verses and one more time in verse 4. In these verses John claims to love the elect lady and her children “in the truth,” that these are also loved by all others who “know the truth,” that this is true precisely “because of the truth,” and that in this they are all following the way of the Father and Son, who indeed dispense the great blessings of grace, mercy, and peace “in truth and love.”

CONCLUSION

1. So as you can see, truth, love, grace, mercy, peace—all come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
2. We can also see that truth and love are inseparable
3. If you have the truth of God inside you, you will love the brethren
4. In fact you will love your enemies too—love them enough to give them the Gospel
5. Do you know the truth?
6. The gospel is the truth ([Gal.2:5](#))
7. It is called “the message of truth” in [Ephesians 1:13](#), “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,”
8. God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” ([1 Tim.2:4](#))
9. Have you experienced the truth of the gospel?
10. Believe and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and He will save you
11. Call on His name
12. Confess Him as Lord
13. Let’s pray