



2 John



THRU**the**BIBLE

NOTES & OUTLINES WITH

J. Vernon McGee

EPISTLES



2 John

WRITER: John the Apostle

DATE: A.D. 90—100

PERSONAL LETTER: This epistle is like Philemon in that it is a personal letter written by John to “the elect lady.” Is the Greek word *electa* a title, or does it refer to a Christian lady in the early church by the name of Electa? It would seem that it was addressed to some lady in the church or to a local church that was extending hospitality to all those who claimed to be Christian, though some were heretics. John warns against entertaining such.

THEME: For truth’s sake. Truth is worth contending for, and it is wrong to receive false teachers.

OUTLINE:

- I. **Love expressed in the boundary of truth, vv. 1–6**
“Love in truth”
- II. **Life is an expression of the doctrine of Christ, vv. 7–11**
(False doctrine leads to evil deeds.)
- III. **Personal greeting, vv. 12, 13**
(False teachers are not to be received by the Christian, but true teachers are to be received with joy.)

COMMENT:

I. **Love expressed in the boundary of truth, vv. 1–6**

V. 1—“The elder” (*presbuteros*) is *presbyter*. It has a twofold meaning: (1) seniority (referring to age), a senior citizen; (2) title (referring to office), minister or teacher. This is an obvious reference to John the apostle. Perhaps John’s life was in jeopardy due to rising persecution so that he withheld his name. John was in his 90s.

“Elect lady” (*electa kyria*), to whom this letter is addressed, could refer to a prominent lady in the church. However, I have come to the opinion that a local church was in view. One cannot be insistent upon either view.

“Truth” (“the” should be omitted) is the theme of this epistle. It means *truly* or *sincerely*. In these second and third epistles we see the teaching of 1 John in action.

“The truth” is the body of doctrine of the apostles.

V. 2—“The truth’s sake” is defense of the truth.

“Dwelleth” is *abides*. “To know Him, to be in Him, to abide in Him means knowledge, fellowship, and constancy” (Bengel).

The Truth in v. 7 is Jesus Christ.

The truth in v. 9 is doctrine.

V. 3—“Grace ... mercy, and peace”—*mercy* has been added.

“In truth and love”—is the polarity of the Christian life. We oscillate back and forth between these two. It is difficult to maintain a balance. Extremes are fighting fundamentalists on one hand and the slobbering liberals on the other (see Ephesians 4:15).

V. 4—Evidently this is an answer to a letter he had received.

“Walking in truth” refers to the manner of life, meaning walking in obedience to commandments from the Father.

V. 5—See notes on 1 John 2:7.

V. 6—John’s teaching in his first epistle walked in shoe leather in the first century of the Roman Empire.

II. Life is an expression of the doctrine of Christ, vv. 7–11

V. 7—Gnosticism denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh; it denied the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cerinthian Gnosticism taught that Jesus was a man on whom the Spirit came at His baptism and left at His crucifixion. Docetic Gnosticism denied the reality of the manhood of Jesus. It taught that He was just a phantom, a figment of the imagination.

“An antichrist” should be *the* antichrist.

V. 8—He warns against the danger of missing a reward, not against losing their salvation.

V. 9—Here he has in mind those who are not real believers. To reject the doctrine of Christ means that they were not believers. Doctrine is also a proof of life.

V. 10—A better translation would be: *If anyone cometh unto you and brings not His teaching (doctrine), receive him not into your house and give him no greeting.* There were no lovely motels in that day, so itinerant teachers were entertained in homes. Believers were not to support these teachers in any way.

V. 11—One who supports a false teacher is a partner in his error. Should not you and I be more careful today?

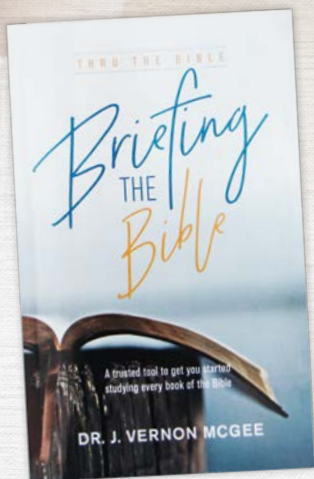
III. Personal greeting, vv. 12, 13

V. 12—John anticipated visiting this person or church to whom he had written.

V. 13—The greetings are from another person or church.

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with *J. Vernon McGee*

Connect with THRU the BIBLE

 Box 7100, Pasadena, California 91109-7100
P.O. Box 25325, London, Ontario, Canada N6C 6B1



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