

Sermon Notes

Series on Second John Second John 7-13 “Protecting the Truth”

John A. Eastman
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Grace Community Bible Church

Introduction: Second John is a very private and personal letter written by the Apostle John, who also wrote 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, the gospel of John and Revelation. Second John contains approximately 245 Greek words and is shorter than all other New Testament books except Third John; this little epistle is comprised of just one page of ancient papyrus. One writer calls it “a pastor’s postcard to his people,” capturing John’s pastoral heart and empathy for these 1st century Christians. Review: At the time this brief epistle was written, the Apostle John was the oldest surviving apostle who personally knew the Lord Jesus Christ in his physical person. His letter is addressed to *the elect lady* whom we identified as a very specific Christian lady, whatever her name might be and that he’s writing to a congregation through her (vv. 1, 4 & 5). To reinforce that thinking, the Apostle John goes back and forth between the singular and the plural uses of words/verbs. Here are the uses of the singular: (v.1—*chosen lady*; v.5—*lady*; v.13—*chosen sister*) and then the uses of the plural: (v.6—*you have heard*; v.8—*watch yourselves*; v.10—*anyone comes to you* & v.12—*write to you...come to you.*) Therefore, perhaps we should understand that the Apostle John is writing these words first of all to a very specific *chosen lady* so that she in turn will share these truths with *her children* in her immediate family as well as the members of the church which might have been meeting in her own home! Conjecture yet possible! John’s theme for this epistle is quite simple as he instructs believers not to entertain false teachers, which is emphasized especially in this section of John’s epistle (vv. 7-11), as the true believers will know the *truth*, love the *truth* and *walk in the truth*. John’s motivation for writing, then, was this issue of hospitality to itinerant evangelists, preachers and teachers. Hospitality in those days was made difficult as the local inns of that day were generally places to be avoided (for additional information check Sermon Notes Lesson #1, 1st John, p.3). Yet, there were many teachers and evangelists who traveled throughout the Roman Empire and when they arrived in a far-away city, they needed a place to stay. Some of these teachers and evangelists were doctrinally solid as a rock; others denied some/many of the teachings of Christ and His apostles. The false teachers of John’s were primarily classed under these titles: Cerinthians, Docetics and/or Gnostics: (for an explanation of the false teachings of the Gnostics, see Sermon Notes Lesson #1, 2nd John 1-6). These denied such doctrines as the incarnation, the deity, the resurrection, etc, just as many preachers and teachers do today. Having commended the believers for practicing the truth in the previous verses, (verses 1-6) the Apostle John now moves to the matter of safeguarding *the truth* or protecting the truth (verses 7-13). If as John has written that the Christian life can be characterized as *living/walking in the truth* (v.4), it can likewise be designated as a life that is lived/*walking in truth*; a life totally opposite of deception (v.7--*deceivers*) and wickedness (v.11—*evil deeds*). John’s warning to the believers is twofold: (1) Realize the danger of deception (7-9): a warning about being *deceived* lest they *lose...a full reward*; and (2) React appropriately to those who bring such danger (vv.10-11): A warning about giving any degree of encouragement to the *deceivers* through various avenues of hospitality. He issues this first warning so that believers will

recognize the nature of biblical error. Smalley writes, “The presbyter’s attention now moves from the existence of true belief inside the Johannine community, which gives him great joy (v4), to the dangers presented it through the espousal of false belief by deceivers who have ‘defected into the world.’ Earlier, the writer has spoke of Christian truth and love; in the remainder of 2 John the emphasis inevitably falls on the need for truth in contrast to error. But the two sections interlock. Departure from the truth results in a failure of love. Thus the dark description of heretical secession and its consequences (vv 7-11) forms the basis of John’s warm appeal for love and unity (vv 4-6).” [Smalley, Stephen S., 1, 2, 3 John, Word Biblical Commentary, p.327].

#1 DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS, Vv.7-9

Verse 7: This verse provides John’s reason for his instructions especially in verse 6 and now links this with what follows. The Apostle John is basically stating that if a believer is *walking in the truth* (v.4), his/her doctrine will be biblically correct when it comes to the Person and Work of Jesus Christ and as a result we will realize the imminent danger of doctrinal *deception*. Recall that Jesus Himself warned His apostles of coming *deceivers* (read Mark 13:22-23; Cf. the apostles words in 1st John 4:1). There are two ways to understand the phrase; *many deceivers have gone out into the world*: (1) people who have *gone out* to evangelize others with their false teaching (cf. John 17:18, 20:21 & Matthew 28:19) or (2) people who *have gone out* of the church which I believe is the best interpretation; the same Greek verb, in the same tense, occurs also in 1 John 2:19 where the apostle writes about this situation. Were these true believers, whom John identifies as having *gone out*? No! Interestingly, in Smalley’s first comment on this verse, he indicates that they weren’t believers: “From other references to ‘antichrists’ in this letter it is evident that when the writer uses this term he means the heterodox ex-members of his own community: those who, in one way or another, were denying the true identity of Jesus, and the fact of God’s saving activity mediated to the world through him.” [Smalley, Stephen S., 1, 2, 3 John, Word Biblical Commentary, p.101]. But Smalley’s next comment indicates the possibility that they might have been believers who *went out*: “. . . it is possible, in this instance, that those who later allowed their heretical thought and actions to run away with them (when it could obviously be said, *ouk esan ex emon*, ‘they were not of us’) were in the first place believers with a genuine, if uninformed, faith in Jesus.” [Smalley, Stephen S., 1, 2, 3 John, Word Biblical Commentary, p.103]. I believe his assessment is incorrect. By way of observation, throughout 1st John, that little personal pronoun *us* always refers to believers (cf. 1:6-2:2) which, I believe, is its meaning here. But I don’t view these as believers because they totally reject the deity of Jesus Christ not to mention that John castigates them with such strong words; *the deceiver and the antichrist*. By connecting the two, *the deceiver and the antichrist*, the Apostle John is indicating the satanic spirit involved in teaching doctrinal *deception/error*. These are emissaries of Satan! Religious seducers; that’s what they are! The Greek word for *deceiver* is *πλανοι*, *planoi*, from *πλανος*, *planos* meaning “leading astray, deceitful, deceiver, imposter.” The verb means “to lead astray, cause to wander, mislead.” Colin Brown states; “The danger for the Christian is of deceiving himself (1 Cor. 3:18; 1 Jn. 1:8) which can lead to falling away from right doctrine. Hence the need for the oft-repeated warning *me planasthe*, ‘do not be deceived’ (1 Cor. 6:9; 15:33; Gal. 6:7; Jas. 1:16; cf. also 2

Thess. 2:3)...To be led astray by false teaching, in the form of philosophy or empty words, and to be led astray into definite acts of sin, are processes that go hand in hand. On the opposite side is – truth (Jas. 5:19f.) which must be held firmly by faith in him who is himself the truth.” [The Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 2, edited by Colin Brown, p. 460]. **Today** in Christianity and churches **we make much too light of doctrinal heresy and error**. Before we leave verse 7, I want us to notice that the Apostle John is not simply saying a *deceiver* and an *antichrist* but uses the definite article with both unnamed people—*the deceiver* and *the antichrist*. Such a person is **the archdeceiver** (the New English Bible uses this translation)! Strong words but this world is filled with seducers and fakers (read Matthew 22:41-42; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4). While John uses the term *antichrist*, he does not mean that all such *deceivers* of his day were the Antichrist of the Tribulation; this spirit of *antichrist* that will one day find its ultimate fulfillment in the *Antichrist* of the Tribulation period (read 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and notice the use of *deception*; & Revelation 13). There are other Bible passages that speak of the *Antichrist* of the Tribulation (Daniel 11:2 & 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). The title *antichrist* occurs only 5 times in the Bible and all 5 are in John’s epistles. As in John’s first epistle, here also John is stating that those who oppose his message and teaching, left the church, or left the house churches—*gone out*. Where did they go? John tells us that they *have gone out into the world* traveling the wonderful Roman roads to disseminate doctrinal heresy throughout the Roman Empire. In their own minds, they were Christian missionaries but to John, satanic emissaries! Their *going out/leaving*, graphically illustrates their doctrinal separation from biblical *truth* specifically because they were denying that *Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh* which is basically a denial of the incarnation, Christ’s deity (read 1 John 5:1-2—*every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is from God, & also 5:1*). They could not conceive of the fact that Jesus was both God and perfect man. John is insisting that those who do not confess Jesus Christ as *coming in the flesh* are the ones who are *the deceiver and the antichrist*. In like respect, the greatest doctrinal heresy in our day is Christological—about the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. That was the problem in John’s day with these traveling teachers who would stay in homes of Christians but were spewing out Gnosticism. See notes from lesson #1 on Gnosticism. Gnostics, Docetism, Cerinthianism, etc. which had spread throughout the *world* (read 1 John 2:18; 22-23, 27; 4:1-3 & 5:1.) They didn’t merely oppose Jesus Christ; they offered a substitute ‘Christ.’ That’s what Mormonism does and they have more than 50,000 satanic emissaries/missionaries disseminating doctrinal heresy throughout the world today. Back in 2000, the President of Brigham Young University predicted that by the year 2025 there would be 125,000 missionaries, or as God would call them, satanic emissaries! Concerning the doctrinal truth of the incarnation, Dr. John R. W. Stott quotes another commentator; “The incarnation is not only an event in history. It is an abiding truth. Jesus did not become the Christ or the Son at His baptism, or cease to be the Christ or the Son before His death; Jesus was ‘the Christ come in the flesh.’ The two natures, manhood and Godhead, were united already at His birth, never to be divided. The use of the present and perfect tenses (in 1 Jn. Iv.2 and here) emphasizes this permanent union of natures in the One Person. [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, pp. 209-210.] Think about some of the top doctrinal errors today espoused by so called ‘scholars.’ They include:

(1) A denial of the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:41-42 & Jude 4). Religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and cults such as Christian Science, Eastern Mysticism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Spiritualism, Unitarianism, Unity, etc deny that *Jesus Christ has come in the flesh* (many of whom also deny the remainder if not all of the doctrines listed below); (2) A denial of the sinless nature of Jesus Christ (read Hebrew 4:15); (3) A denial of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ (read Romans 5:6-8 & 2 Corinthians 5:21); (4) A denial of the necessity of Christ's blood for the forgiveness of sins (read Acts 20:28; Hebrews 9:22 & 1 John 1:7); (5) A denial of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (read 1 Corinthians 15); (6) A denial of the inerrancy of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16 & 2 Peter 1:21) & (7) A denial of the literal and bodily return of Jesus Christ to the earth to rule and reign during the Millennial Kingdom—still future (read Zechariah 14:1-4; Matthew 24:27; & Revelation 1:7). I'm especially concerned that many Christians are unaware of the doctrinal dangers that exist in many churches today concerning the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. In fact all too many Christian parishioners and pastors don't really even care! To some, if it looks like a Christian church and sounds like a Christian church then it's ok even if that church is man-centered and not Christ-centered. One person makes this thought-provoking comment; "We live in a day when almost no one wants to exercise spiritual discrimination because we live in a culture that neutralizes truth. No one wants to be dogmatic or claim anything definitely." In the next verse, the Apostle John urges the *lady* (verse 1) and his readers not to fall prey to the same error as those who *have gone out into the world* and suffer *loss of reward*.

Verse 8: John continues his warning stating that believers who are soft on heresy will *lose* their *full reward*. *Watch yourselves* is a present tense Greek verb [βλεπετε, blepete] indicating that you and I are to be continually on the lookout and on our guard against false doctrine; something to be done intently (read Matthew 24:4). John is telling us to do constant self-evaluation (2 Corinthians 13:5). Elsewhere the Bible exhorts believer to *take heed* (1 Corinthians 10:12; Colossians 4:17) & 1 Timothy 4:16. The Greek word involves eye perception, literal—'to see with the use of the eyes' (Matthew 5:28) or metaphorical—'to see with the mind's eye' (1 Corinthians 13:12). We're often too busy *watching* other Christians and churches rather than *guarding/watching ourselves* lest we get duped, *deceived*, or caught up with what's popular in Christian circles these days and/or smooth talking Christian charlatans. We are to secure our own minds and hearts; be on the alert and *watch* out to see that the *deceivers* do not make inroads into the Christian community. So, is John stating that we may *lose* our salvation? No! Compromise with false teaching leads to the *loss of rewards* not *loss of salvation*. We are not going to *lose* our salvation or our place in heaven, if one is truly born-again. Salvation rests solely on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross (John 10:28-30; 13:1; Romans 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1; Jude 24, etc.) and is His gift to us Ephesians 2:8. The verb that is translated *lose* is used by the Apostle John in his gospel referring to being *lost* (cf. John 6:39; 17:12 & 18:9) or *perish* (John 3:16 & 10:28). Jesus isn't going to *lose* any of His own—us! Those who reject Jesus' offer of eternal life are *lost* and are *perishing*. So, what does John mean by his words, *lose what we have accomplished*? I believe that when a Christian is soft on the teaching of false teachers, perhaps even giving tacit acknowledgement of it, that person *loses*

a great deal—he/she jeopardizes the value of one’s earthly life! Participation in any false teaching negates *reward* in heaven. To *lose what we have* worked for is to *lose* life. It would be the same as abandoning one’s commitment to God for John is using the phrase *what we have accomplished* as an act of faith (cf. Jesus’ words in John 6:29). Perhaps John is telling us to *watch* lest our time on earth is essentially wasted! Compare Paul’s important statements in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. Crowns: In his apocalypse, the Apostle John warns about someone seizing our *crown*: *I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown* (Revelation 3:11). The Bible teaches that there are at least 5 different *crowns* that believers will receive: (1) The *crown* of rejoicing often called the soul-winners *crown* for evangelism/for declaring the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:19); (2) the *crown* of righteousness for those who love His appearing/for those who each day anticipate the imminent return of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 4:8); (3) the *crown* of life for testing of saints who suffer in a noble manner during their lifetime (James 1:12 & Revelation 2:10); (4) the *crown* of glory promised to those who faithfully shepherd believers (1 Peter 5:4); & (5) the imperishable *crown* given to believers who consistently bring the flesh under the control of the Holy Spirit, refusing to be enslaved by the sinful nature (1 Corinthians 9:25). How exciting that day will be when we *receive a full reward* but then recognize that we will submit ourselves entirely to the authority of the One who wore the *crown of thorns* (Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17 & John 19:1-5) and cast our *crowns* at His feet (Revelation 4:10-11). Notice also, that he warns believers so that we might *receive a full reward*—that should be our goal. We might *lose* some of the *reward* that God has for us and not *receive* all that God has ready for us! Work and ministry for Christ can be *lost*—think about that! *Reward* is the Greek word that was used to refer to a day’s laborer’s wage; payment due in exchange for his/her labor. This is not necessarily a favorite word of the Apostle John but can be found in Revelation 11:18 & 22:12. Participation in any way in any kind of heresy/false teaching negates our *rewards* in heaven (Colossians 2:18-19 & Revelation 3:11). For other places where this word *reward* is used or implied; read Matthew 5:11; 6:6, 16; 1 Corinthians 3:8; 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12; Colossians 2:18; 3:23 & Revelation 22:12). Application thought: Our life is merely a hiccup—brief, like a vapor (James 4:14) and have a very short time to be used by God before we are ushered into Christ’s kingdom. What are we presenting to Christ? What fruit/*reward* will be ours from Him? Hymn: I can recall this hymn of the faith (regretfully, not in our hymnbook), “Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown?” and want to share it with you as it fits in well here. (Stanza 1): “I am thinking today of that beautiful land, I shall reach when the sun goeth down; when through wonderful grace by my Savior I stand, will there be any stars in my crown? (Refrain) Will there be any stars, any stars in my crown when at evening the sun goeth down? When I wake with the blest in the mansions of rest, will there be any stars in my crown? (Stanza 2): In the strength of the Lord let me labor and pray, let me watch as a winner of souls; That bright stars may be mine in the glorious day, when His praise like the sea billows roll. (Stanza 3): Oh, what joy it will be when His face I behold, living gems at His feet to lay down; it would sweeten my bliss in the city of gold, should there be any stars in my crown.” What a great hymn! Brethren; aim for a *full reward* in heaven!

Verse 9: John continues to indicate how to recognize false teachers, those who do not *abide in the teaching of Christ*, and yet desire hospitality from the saints. This verse might cause us to initially scratch our heads as to what does John mean by *going too far*. The verb can be translated as “is so advanced.” Literally it comes from a root verb that means “to go before.” Here it can carry the meaning of ‘to go beyond’ or ‘to go ahead.’ The Greek verb itself does not have negative connotations but the negativity is derived from the context and the striking contrast with *does not abide in the teaching of Christ*. The apostle is being sarcastic; he’s alluding to the Gnostics who believed that they had a deeper and a more spiritual understanding of *truth* than the apostles and others in the church. In fact, he’s probably borrowing the words *goes too far* from the vocabulary of the false teachers who believed that their thinking was better and *far* ahead and *far* superior than John’s. These heretics thought of themselves as being much more enlightened than the rest of the Christians (read 1 John 2:23-24). Ever meet religious people who feel that they have a corner on God? A little bit better ‘Christian’ than you? Be afraid of those who claim ‘new revelation’ or groups who claim that the Bible is not sufficient to tell us what we need to know about God—who claim that we need ‘a 2nd testament of Jesus Christ! These consider themselves ‘progressives’ rather than ‘conservatives.’ Recall that the Gnostics denied the importance of Jesus’ earthly life including His sacrificial death on the cross; don’t show them hospitality! John is telling us that when someone *goes too far* into false teaching they are stepping out of the *truth* into error. The verb *abide* indicates that the Apostle John is speaking about one whose relationship is centered in Jesus Christ; it’s real and vital and characterized by obedience. It is one thing for the *truth* to *abide* in the believer and it is another thing for the believer to remain in the *truth* (read also John 8:31; 14:21-23 & 15:1-7). The Greek verb μένω, *menon*, from μένω, *meno*, used in connection with διδασκαλη, *didache*, *teaching*, is found only here in verse 10 in John’s epistles but is used three times in his gospel, 7:16; 7:17 & 19:19 (although John uses *abide/s* often but not connected with *teaching*.) The phrase *does not have God* can be understood to mean, ‘has no true knowledge of God and therefore these are not genuine believers and should not be extended hospitality. Speaking of *abiding in the teaching/doctrine*, here are a few **thoughts on teaching/doctrine** (that I extracted from www.preceptaustin.org): ‘...holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (Titus 1:9, NASU). Here are a few comments are on Paul’s choice of the Greek words: sound, υγιαινουση, *hugiainouse* from υγιαίνω, *hugiaino*, meaning “sound, healthy” and is the root of our English word, “hygiene,” therefore, “making sick people whole; consequently, that which is wholesome and so that which gives health. In context refers "sound doctrine" refers to that teaching which gives spiritual health to the inner man and it implies that false doctrine produces spiritual disease and debilitation and ultimately death eternally! Consider Colossians 2:4: I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. NASU & Colossians 2:8-9: 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.... NASU. The contrast is that through persuasive arguments (Colossians 2:4) and empty deception (Colossians 2:8) Colossian believers could

be deluded and taken captive and cease as a functioning body in Colossae. Paul's word sound in Titus 1:9, translates the present tense participle form of verb $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\iota\alpha\iota\nu\omega$, *hugiaino*, meaning continually being well and healthy. Actually Paul uses a form of this word 9 times in the pastoral epistles, 5 times in Titus, and always in relation to personal righteousness and spiritual well-being, repeatedly emphasizing that sound doctrine (cf. 1 Timothy 1:10 & 2 Timothy 4:3), is the foundation for and gives rise to sound faith and sound speaking (cf. 1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:2 & 8—the use of the word sound.) The only weapon against Satan's lies is God's truth; this word truth, as we have observed, is a key word in John's 2nd epistle. Therefore, Sound doctrine is teaching that promotes spiritual health, and requires conduct consistent with the teaching believed and lived. When a believer lives a morally bankrupted life, he/she is diseased and is in need of treatment by sound doctrine. A life based on the teaching of sound doctrine is wholesome, clean and healthy. As the Apostle John has been showing, correct doctrine produces correct behavior. One writer has translated Titus 1:9: that he will be able both to exhort in the things that belong to healthy doctrine....

Doctrine: $\delta\iota\delta\alpha\sigma\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\alpha$, *didaskalia*, from the verb, $\delta\iota\delta\alpha\sigma\kappa\omega$, *didasko*, either the act of teaching or the thing taught and in this use denotes doctrine or what is taught. The word doctrine is from Latin "doctrina" in turn from $\delta\omicron\kappa\epsilon\omega$, *doceo*, meaning "to teach." $\Delta\iota\delta\alpha\sigma\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\alpha$ is used 21 times in the New Testament (1 time in Matthew, Mark, Ephesians, Colossians; 2 times in Romans; 3 times in 2 Timothy; 4 times in Titus; & 8 times in 1 Timothy.) Definition of doctrine: The term doctrine in Scripture "is broader than a simple reference to information passed on from one person to another or from one generation to the next. Christianity is a religion founded on a message of good news rooted in the significance of the life of Jesus Christ. In Scripture, then, doctrine refers to the entire body of essential theological truths that define and describe that message (1 Ti 1:10p 4:16; 6:3; Titus 1:9). The message includes historical facts, such as those regarding the events of the life of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 11:23). But it is deeper than biographical facts alone. As J. Gresham Machen pointed out years ago, Jesus' death is an integral historical fact but it is not doctrine. Jesus' death for sins (1 Cor 15:3) is doctrine. (Sound) *Doctrine*, then, is scriptural teaching on theological truths." (parenthesis added) [Elwell, W. A., & Elwell, W. A., The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, Baker Book House, p.]. Concerning contemporary music, noted Bible teacher, Warren Wiersbe writes: "Far too many songs not only teach no doctrine, but many even teach false doctrines. A singer has no more right to sing a lie than a teacher has to teach a lie." [Wiersbe, Warren, Bible Exposition Commentary, Victor Press]. In Ephesians 4:12, the Apostle Paul emphasizes the danger of false *doctrine* to the Ephesian church noting that as the result of *equipping* people with *sound* teaching it would result in: 12b *the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 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;* (Ephesians 4:12b-14). NASU. If believers are not anchored in *sound doctrine* based solely on the Word of *truth*, one will be vulnerable to counterfeit *truth*. Vance Havner had a timely word for the modern church when he remarked that "Every Christian is commissioned, for every Christian is a missionary. It has been said that the Gospel is not

merely something to come to church to hear but something to go from the church to tell—and we are all appointed to tell it. It has also been said, ‘Christianity began as a company of lay witnesses; it has become a professional pulpitude, financed by lay spectators!’ Nowadays we hire a church staff to do ‘full-time Christian work,’ and we sit in church on Sunday to watch them do it. Every Christian is meant to be in full-time Christian service ... There is indeed a special ministry of pastors, teachers and evangelists—but for what? ... *For the perfecting of the saints for their ministry.*" Paul warns: *But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons....*(1 Timothy 4:1-2 NASU). Paul uses that same Greek word, διδασκαλία, didaskalia to refer to the teaching of *demons* as he writes about Satan’s work, who is also the deceiver and father of lies, and the *demons* are invisible forces behind the *latter times* departure from the faith. To sit under the *teaching* of *doctrine* that is not *sound* but which contradicts the *truth* of Scripture is to be taught by *demons*, and to put one’s very mind and soul in both temporal and eternal jeopardy. The ultimate aim of the demonic *doctrine* is to cause people to follow Satan by devious means. Christian pastors/teachers/leaders today: It is imperative that these hold to the *solid teaching/doctrine*: The Bible teacher, John MacArthur speaks to this problem with these words: "This quality is basic to excellence in ministry, but is sadly lacking in the church today. Much contemporary preaching is weak and produces weak churches because it reflects a lack of biblical knowledge, and a minimal commitment to the study of Scripture. For many pastors, study is an unwelcome intrusion into their schedule. It interrupts the routine of administrative tasks and meetings with which they occupy themselves. They study only enough to make a sermon, not to feed their own hearts and think deeply and carefully on divine truth. The result is impotent sermons that fall on hard hearts and have little impact." [MacArthur, John, 1 Timothy, Moody Press]. Consider Paul’s challenging words to the young pastor, Timothy: *13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.* (1 Timothy 4:13-15, NASU). Paul uses that word διδασκαλία, didaskalia in verse 13, *teaching*. Ministering the Word was not something Timothy was to do after he had done other things but was to be the most important thing he did. Timothy was to make sure the churches church leaders read the Scriptures in the meetings of the church, that exhortation including explanation and application, should continue to accompany the reading of the Word and that there be systematic instruction in the doctrines of the faith. Paul finishes his challenge to Timothy with these words: *Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.* (1 Timothy 4:16, NASU).

#2 DEALING WITH FALSE TEACHERS, vv.10-11

Verse 10: Now the Apostle John moves to reacting appropriately to these false teachers. John is asserting loud and clear; don’t give any hospitality or cooperation to traveling false teachers; to anyone teaching false doctrines. Observation: in 2nd John only verses 10 & 11 address a theme that is not mentioned in 1st John. In John’s day, traveling teachers and evangelists were very dependent on people in their audience for hospitality, lodging and even financial assistance (read Acts 18:1-4; 21:7-8 & 3 John 5, 8). Here’s the big question: are we

believers to be most exclusive? Are we to keep unbelievers out of our homes? As to our day, are we to keep the Mormon missionaries out of our homes? Is this a license to be rude? Elitists? Better than thou's? Intolerant? Where does love and Christian charity fit in? Remember, there is a danger of being legalistic and not loving the unbelieving to the point that we are offensive to the cause of Christ. Again, *truth* and proper doctrine should be spoken in love and love should be bounded by *truth*. As I stated in lesson #1 on 2nd John: *Truth* and *love* go hand in hand relationally; *truth* is the motivation and the context for experiencing Christian *love* as *true love* is bound by *truth*. In much of so-called Christianity today, *truth* takes a back seat to *loving* others; but **the teachings of the Word of God never surrender *truth* for *love*—never!** *Truth* is always on at stake in the church, then and now. Before I go any further, I want to make it very clear that this verse has nothing to do with showing hospitality to those who are mere unbelievers—the lost. We are not to be exclusive toward lost people—never! This verse is primarily about those who are propagating a false doctrine about Jesus Christ. The Word of God is not teaching here that we are to exclude unbelievers from our homes. God desires that we build relationships with the lost; neighbors, family, friends, coworkers, classmates etc. (read Matthew 5:13-16; 28:18-20; John 8:12; Acts 1:8; Romans 12:13-18; 2 Corinthians 3:1-3; Ephesians 5:8-14; Philippians 2:15, etc.). The key to understanding this verse is this: for this unnamed *lady and her children* (2 John 1, 4, 5) and those in the church, that probably met in her home, to *receive* any false teacher/heretic *into your house* is tantamount to *receiving* them into the church—into Grace Community Bible Church! As John asserted in verses 1-6, the **only grounds** for fellowship is *truth*, correct doctrine about *the teaching of Christ* (v.9). Remember, the Apostle John has called these *deceivers and antichrist* (v.7)—straight from the pit of hell! The picture that the Apostle John gives me is that any teacher whose teaching is opposed to *the teaching of Christ* is to be quarantined from my house and my church! Illustration: Let me illustrate that with a decision that the Board of Elders of Grace Community Church made about 4 years ago. We had been providing financial support to a missionary who was a friend of one of our former members. When that missionary chose to unite with a new mission sending agency we learned that the doctrine of that new mission organization differed greatly with our doctrine. That organization believed that baptism was necessary for one's salvation. When we brought that to the attention of this wonderful, loving, and energetic missionary couple, and challenged them to sever their ties or we would be forced to drop our financial support for them, they chose to continue with that organization that is opposed to the Word of God in a critical doctrinal area—salvation. As a result, we dropped our support for them, March 2004. Some Christians are just so loving to others which is a great virtue; a wonderful characteristic and therefore think that 'we've just gotta love everybody!' No we don't and I'm a really 'loving' guy! Dr. Marshall wisely writes: "The real point is this: there's a difference between giving a person love and even hospitality, and providing him with a base." [Marshall, I. Howard. The Epistles of John, (in the New International Commentary on the New Testament Series); p.] I found this great quote by Charles Swindoll: "Love is the hinge on which hospitality turns to open its door, but just as a door has hinges, it also has a lock. Love never opens a locked door to a wolf, even if it is dressed in sheep's clothing." Powerful and descriptive words, right? We must not provide a base for teachers of false doctrine to

proliferate teaching opposed to the Word of God. Some Bible teachers understand this word *house* to be a reference to the church. However, it should be noted that this Greek noun is feminine, while all the other non-Johannine New Testament references to house churches are masculine (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15 & Philemon 2). Also, if the *chosen lady* of 2 John 1 and the *chosen sister* of 2 John 13 are churches, they are referred to as feminine entities, which I don't think is the correct interpretation. At the end of the verse, consider the phrase, *do not give him a greeting*; means *do not publicly greet him* as we would a true believer. The Greek word that is used means to cordially *greet* a guest upon arrival at one's home and also when he/she departed (2 Corinthians 13:12-13). The Greek word for *greet* is χαίρειν, *chairein*, emphasizing a friendly address of welcome or farewell similar to our saying, 'it's good to see you' or 'I hope things go well for you'. John asserts; don't encourage these *deceivers and antichrists* by *greeting* them—don't give heretics the slightest degree of verbal encouragement (read Acts 15:24-26; 1 Corinthians 10:20; & 1 Timothy 5:22. While John is strong on not compromising on his point of refraining from hospitality to heretics, I don't believe John would oppose meeting in private with those who will listen to the *truth* of the Word of God. However, we ought to be warm and friendly to those who have differing opinions on certain matters like believing Calvinists and believing Arminians! Charismatic believers and non charismatics! *Greet* them both! Mormons & Jehovah's Witnesses: As to today's cultists such as the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses, you will have to make that call. We must think through the ramifications of these verses for ourselves. *Receiving* one such as these into your home for a few hours of conversation, is not the same kind of hospitality that the Apostle John has in view as we are not providing over-night lodging and food. None of us need any warning however, that by inviting someone into your home, we are inviting a representative of Satan himself, *the deceiver and the antichrist!* Some choose to invite them in while others enjoy spirited dialogue at the door. Cultists are known for monopolizing conversations and generalizing and even agreeing with believers on matters of doctrine that they actually do not believe. We must ask ourselves; would what I'm doing be considered giving them any kind of assistance or encouragement.

Verse 11: To the prohibition John's already issued, he adds...*for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds*. That word *participates* indicates that when we *give a greeting*, show hospitality to a false teacher, we are sharing in fellowship with him/her and such active *participation* could be construed as giving endorsement and credibility to their false teaching concerning *the teaching of Christ*. The New Living Paraphrase tells it like it is: *Anyone who encourages him becomes a partner in his evil work*. The Greek word for *evil* is πονηροίς, *ponerois*, meaning "wicked" and is the last word in the Greek text—placed at the end to emphasize the wickedness of their *work*.

#3 DESIRE TO VISIT THE BELIEVERS, vv. 12-13

Verse 12: The conclusions to both 2nd and 3rd John are quite similar (read 3rd John 13-14). As John concludes this 2nd epistle, we learn that he really would like to write more but instead he chooses to plan his next trip to see them (cf. what Paul states as recorded in Romans 1:11-12). *Paper*, strictly speaking, was not invented until after the apostle died; so to the Apostle John, *paper* was a papyrus, not parchment which would have been much more expensive for John to have purchased. He longed for *face to face* interaction with those believers whom he

loved. Townsend provides this great detail to writing materials of John's day: "Papyrus material was derived from the pith of the papyrus reed which grew about 6-15 feet high in swampy places like the Nile River delta. The papyrus pith was cut into strips which were laid vertically and horizontally, then pasted and pounded together. When prepared, they were something like brown wrapping paper. New Testament manuscripts up to the fourth century A.D. are only of the papyrus variety. A standard papyrus sheet was somewhat similar in size to our modern 8 by 11 inch notebook paper. The 'ink' they used was literally 'black' (vs. 12; III Jn. 13), composed of ingredients such as soot or black carbon mixed with water, oil, or gum. In contrast to modern liquid whitener, they used ancient liquid blackener. Often a stylus made of bone, ivory, or metal or a reed pen was used for writing." [Townsend, James A., The Epistles of John & Jude, David C. Cook, p.77]. John's purpose in seeing them was to give them *full/complete joy*; note that his focus was not on himself, even though I'm sure he too would experience the same emotion (read 1 John 1:3-4) when they stood *face to face*.

Verse 13: *The children of your chosen sister greet you.* Some unanswered questions: (1) who is *elect sister*—nothing more is known; (2) has the mother of the unnamed *chosen lady* (vv. 1 & 4) died and these are her nephews and nieces as it is significant that this greeting comes from the *children* of the *chosen sister* and not the *sister* herself? (3) Did these *children* inform the Apostle John that *the chosen lady* wrongly gave hospitality to false teachers? (4) Is this a reference to the members of this church or a *sister* church? But this we can conclude; they are Christians—*children of your chosen/elect sister*; perhaps the *sister* of the unnamed *chosen lady* and that they both had *children*.

Martin Luther is quoted as saying these insightful words about doctrine: "I am not permitted to let my love be so merciful as to tolerate and endure false doctrine. When faith and doctrine are concerned and endangered, neither love nor patience are in order.... when these are concerned, neither toleration nor mercy are in order, but only anger, dispute, and destruction - - to be sure, only with the Word of God as our weapon." - Martin Luther.

Note: It is my prayer that these printed notes will encourage Bible students to do further study on this passage. If you find any typos, errors or have any questions, please contact me. Since these notes are also available on our website, www.gcc-am.org, your assistance in drawing my attention to necessary corrections will be greatly appreciated. I've made every effort to give credit to quotations from other authors. Thank you. Pastor John A. Eastman