



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

2 John 1:1-13 Commentary **New Revised Standard Version**

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

(2 John 1:1) The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not only I but also all who know the truth,

John was the apostle and teacher in the Church who wrote the Gospel of John, the Book of Revelation, and three letters in the Bible. The “elect lady” was most probably a particular congregation or possibly “the Church,” which would have included many congregations such as those listed in the Book of Revelation. Her children are the individual members of the Church, not simply other Church leaders. All who know the truth love the Church and God's children in the Church, just as John wrote that he did.

(2 John 1:2) because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

Jesus declared that He was the truth (John 14:6). Jesus and His truth abides in or remains in the children of God and the Church that confesses Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God (1 John 4:15; 1 John 5:1). Jesus did not promise to be forever with the person or Church that refuses to believe or turns from believing and loving the truth that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God (see especially the Book of Revelation, chapters 1-3). In 1 John

2:18-22, 1 John 4:3, and 2 John 4:7, John wrote about antichrists who had been among them, but who left them because they were never really a part of Christ and the Church.

(2 John 1:3) Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, in truth and love.

John declared specifically and repeatedly that God the Father and the Father's Son, Jesus Christ, love us and have revealed the truth to us. God is love and Jesus demonstrated the love of God in truth as God's Son. The love of the Father and the Son for us motivates them to extend grace, mercy, and peace to us as their children, and we are their children if we believe the truth about the Father and the Son, which inspires us to love them, because they first loved us. Because of the grace of God, Christians receive mercy from God and forgiveness of their sins through the atoning sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, which gives them peace with God and peace within themselves and others insofar as the possibility of peace with others resides with them: this is the truth about God's love for us.

(2 John 1:4) I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father.

One important word in this verse is "some." John was overjoyed to find "some" of those in the Church "walking" or "living" in the truth and according to the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ. "Walking" is a way of life, and John rejoiced that some in the Church maintained a way of life according to the Way of Jesus and they lived as the Father commanded. God's children were living in both truth and love (truth and love cannot be separated, for learning the truth about God and reality should lead to love, and those who love should speak and live in the truth of God and reality).

(2 John 1:5) But now, dear lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another.

Because only “some” in the Church were walking in the truth, John went on emphasize a commandment that the Church had from the beginning. John wrote the Church, the “dear lady,” to remind her members to love one another. Those who walked in the truth loved others in the Church just as the Father commanded them. Some were members of the Church because at one time they had repented of their sins and professed a faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God as far as others could tell (they could not see into their hearts), but these members were not acting with love in truth toward others in the Church.

(2 John 1:6) And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning—you must walk in it.

Love is a way of life, not just a way of feeling. Love as a way of life is a commandment of God no matter how we feel. Love includes speaking the truth because we know and love the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ, who is the truth, and we can speak and teach the truth in love. Love includes how we treat others as a way of life (see 1 Corinthians 13). The fruit of the Spirit is or includes love for God and others, which promotes the well-being of others—a concern that they repent of their sins and follow Jesus and His teachings, a concern that they grow in faith, love, and holiness according to the Bible, the Word of God written.

(2 John 1:7) Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist!

What John saw as a problem of life and death in his day has continued throughout history and will remain a problem until Jesus Christ returns as John foretold in the Book of Revelation. Some refuse to confess that the Messiah has come. Some refuse to confess that Jesus is the Messiah and Jesus has come into the world and into the lives of God’s children as the Bible describes. Those who refuse to believe the truth, especially the truth about Jesus, are antichrist (against Christ), and they are unloving people who try to deceive others. They are deceivers who will try to lead the children of God and those who walk in love and light into hatred and

darkness, into disbelief in the truth of God in Christ and into hatred for God and the children of God (which can be very subtle). John knew, just as the Church has known for centuries, that some will come into the Church and appear to be sincere Christians, and then they will go out into the world (morally and spiritually leave the Church, if not physically leave the Church) and try to deceive others inside and outside the Church by leading people away from trust in the Word of God in the flesh and the Word of God written.

(2 John 1:8) Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward.

Members of the Church who had worked hard to learn, understand, and rightly apply the truth as embodied and revealed by Jesus Christ in love could be deceived by those who were against Christ and what the Bible taught about Christ. John warned everyone in the Church to be alert and on guard, so this did not happen to them. A full reward would include receiving fully and knowingly the loving presence of God in Christ and avoiding the discipline of God to lead them back into a walk of truth in love. We can work hard to learn and rightly apply the Scriptures victoriously in this life, and we do not want to fall back into practicing sin and lose the progress we have made in following Christ with the Holy Spirit's help.

(2 John 1:9) Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

The teaching of Christ is revealed clearly throughout the New Testament and the commands of Christ are completely consistent with the truth of God and the reality of existence. A person can "go beyond" Christ's teachings by restricting the right application of them or by extending their application into areas that Christ never intended: to do either can be a sign that a person does not have God—some people will do this out of ignorance and not rebellion against God. The truth demands that a true child of God abide or remain true to the teachings of Christ and the Bible. We must remain true to the Bible. Both the Father and the Son abide in us and help walk in their way of love and truth. We must be careful that a theology of

God, a theological system, or a Biblical interpretation made by fallible human beings (or even ourselves) does not replace a truly biblical faith and practice or replace God's love and truth in our relationships with others.

(2 John 1:10) Do not receive into the house or welcome anyone who comes to you and does not bring this teaching;

As a Church leader, the Holy Spirit inspired John to explicitly state how serious it is and can be when any child of God or Christian congregation admits into their lives someone who brings teaching that is contrary to or contradicts the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Bible—even a theology or interpretation of the Bible that might have been highly regarded in the past, but was more cultural than Biblical. To welcome them can lead to listening to them and to being misled by them which can lead to multitudes being misled away from truth and love for generations. Churches can decline morally and spiritually over many generations as they regress and lose the love and the truth of Christ and the Scriptures: John's Book of Revelation warns about this possibility. Whereas adults and mature Christians might be wise enough not to be misled by someone who is teaching contrary to the Bible in the Church, their children can be more easily misled unknown to them until they fall away from following Christ and into moral and spiritual decline and death.

(2 John 1:11) for to welcome is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person.

It is an evil deed to deceive another. It is an evil deed to deceive another about the true teachings of Jesus Christ and the Bible. When the child of God continues to love and obey God and the commandments of God in the Bible; when they pray for the Holy Spirit to help them discern the truth and walk in love, they are less likely to be deceived but not totally protected from ever being deceived if they become thoughtless and prayerless. To even welcome a deceiver into a person's Church, home, or life is to participate in the deceiver's evil efforts to deceive—and evil will result.

(2 John 1:12) Although I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink; instead I hope to come to you and

talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

John had much more to say about how a child of God can protect themselves from deceivers and being deceived. Every detail about how to remain mentally and spiritually united to Jesus Christ and the truth of Christ and the Bible needed to be discussed: questions asked could be explained and answered and John hoped to visit the Church that he wrote to and other congregations to have this joyful fellowship time of teaching.

(2 John 1:13) The children of your elect sister send you their greetings.

John participated fully in the life of the congregation where he lived and taught. The children of God in his congregation sent their greetings along with his to the Church and other congregations that would read his letter. This letter obviously meant a great deal to the Church, and it may have been copied and circulated among many Churches, because God providentially protected it so it could be saved in the Bible and read by the Church through the ages.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Who do you think is the elect lady and her children?
2. What abides in a true Christian forever according to 2 John 1:1-13?
3. How are Christians supposed to live (walk) and why should they live (walk) that way?
4. According to John, what are some characteristics of a deceiver?
5. What are some of the things people are doing when they welcome a deceiver into their home or church? What can happen to such a home or church?

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Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73083 and lgp@theiblf.com.