

## Exposed to the Truth

2 John 9-13

The letter John wrote to the elect lady and her children was short and to the point. He was impressed with the testimony of their lives and their commitment to abiding in the truth. It is evident that John desired to encourage them in the faith, seeking to equip them to continue their stand for truth.

As we consider the entirety of the letter, we discover that John closed with a stern warning against false teachers, providing detailed instruction in dealing with those who opposed the faith, and sought to spread false doctrine. The elect lady and her children had been faithful to the Lord and John hoped to encourage them to remain committed. He knew the temptations and adversity they faced. Subtle, false teachers had been successful in leading many astray. John was determined to do all he could to prevent the elect lady and the children from falling victim to the schemes and deceit of false teachers.

Paul offers sound wisdom when dealing with similar situations. [1 Cor.10:12 – Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall](#). As we move through these closing verses, we will discover the subtle tactics of false teachers. In order to prevent falling prey to such teaching, we must be aware of their tactics and approach. The best defense against false teaching is a thorough understanding of the core doctrines of the Bible. We must abide in the Word while abiding in Christ if we are to overcome those who seek to hinder our faith and undermine sound doctrine. False teachers work very methodically, rarely, if ever removing all truth. They leave enough truth to make it palatable, while sprinkling in false doctrine subtly.

As we conclude John's second epistle, I want us to consider the [instructions](#) he provided as we think on being: [Exposed to the Truth](#).

**I. The Condition of Men** (9) – [Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son](#). John revealed that all men fall into one of two categories – those who reject sound doctrine and those who abide faithfully in sound doctrine. These can be classified as false teachers and faithful believers. Let's take a moment to examine each category. Consider:

**A. The False Teachers** (9a) – [Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God](#). John declared those who violate the truth of God, failing to abide in the sound doctrine which is founded in Christ do not have God. Transgression or violation of truth has a devastating activity associated with such endeavors. It actually has the idea of "*going too far; literally going*

*beyond what Christ has established.” John declared that many false teachers have sought to move out ahead of Christ, wandering beyond the truth He proclaimed and established. Consider some insightful commentary: *There are many teachers, ministers and laymen alike, who would like to be progressive and creative, to come up with a novel idea, to make some advancement in thought. They want people to recognize and approve them; therefore, they try to impress people. In so doing, they go beyond Christ and what He taught. They twist or branch off from the teachings of Christ. John warns against this: if a person does not stay in the teachings of Christ, then he does not have God. He is not saved; he is not truly born of God.**<sup>i</sup>

- Early believers, including John and the elect lady were forced to deal with such deception being promoted by false teachers, and we continue to face such dangers today. In fact, when one considers false teachers, this attribute is almost always present. Men want to be recognized for their wisdom and ability to “discern” the Scriptures. They often claim to have new revelation or specific insight that was previously hidden to former generations.
- Typically, these teach in a manner consistent with their agenda, whatever that may be, seeking to distort and twist the Scripture to substantiate the doctrine they hope to promote. Many times, these will promote doctrines with legalistic tendencies founded on works of the flesh to obtain or show the righteousness they desire. These will likely uphold the Gospel of Christ, but upon closer examination of their doctrine, one discovers they have in essence added to the Gospel, requiring other means of justification beyond the finished work of Christ. The truth has not changed since John’s day. We must be cautious of these because they do not have a right relationship with God – in fact, they do not have Him at all. They are lost in sin, separated from God.

**B. The Faithful Believers (9b)** – *He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.* In contrast to the false teachers, John declared those who abide in the doctrine of Christ have both the Father and the Son. These rest solely in the truth of the Gospel, the finished work of Christ to fully atone for sin, providing salvation and reconciliation to God.

- If you will listen to a man, his words will reveal what he believes. Sound doctrine always rests solely in Christ. It never seeks to go beyond what He has taught, nor does it seek to diminish His atoning work. Simply, our hope rests in Christ alone! He alone is the standard for our faith!

**II. The Reaction to False Doctrine (10-11)** – Here John offered wise counsel when dealing with false doctrine. He spoke of:

**A. The Potential** (10a) – *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.* John did not know with certainty that the elect lady would have a false teacher show up at her house, but he warned her of the potential. If, and when, they came, she was to measure their worth through the doctrine they taught. She would know them by the words they spoke. It appears John expected her to deal with false teachers at some point.

- This is an issue that has plagued the church and individual believers since Pentecost. It seems that churches committed to sound doctrine will eventually have a false teacher show up seeking an audience. The enemy seeks to plant them in biblically sound churches in an attempt to corrupt their doctrine and create discord. We must be continually aware of the potential for false teachers among us. I believe in giving folks a chance to utilize their spiritual gifts, but we must know who we are placing in positions that handle the Word of God.

**B. The Refusal** (10b) – *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.* This seems harsh in our politically correct society, but it is needed and essential. John cautioned the elect lady about allowing a false teacher into her house. In fact, she was not to even wish God's blessing upon them. She was to have nothing to do with a false teacher, seeking to avoid them at all costs.

- Every church desires growth, but we need to be wise about those seeking membership among us. We cannot afford to open our doors to false teachers, providing access to unsuspecting people. I am not saying we have done so, but we must keep our guard up. We must ensure these are kept from the church if we are to ensure the continuation of sound doctrine. A false teacher can do irreparable harm in a short amount of time.

**C. The Betrayal** (11) – *For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.* John offered a sobering warning – those who wish a false teacher God speed has actually become a participant in their evil deeds, and thus denying the faith. This seems harsh, but we must understand the severity of the problem. The church is built upon the solid foundation of the Gospel. We must guard that foundation, doing all we can to prevent anyone or anything from attacking or seeking to weaken the foundation. Granted, we must treat all with the love of Christ, striving to reach them with truth, but we must never compromise the truth for the sake of cooperation!

**III. The Expectation of Joy** (12-13) – John concluded his brief letter with an expectation of joy. Notice:

**A. The Communication** (12a) – *Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.* While John admitted his letter was brief, he also had much more he wished to convey. In fact, he wished to discuss more with them than it would be profitable to write in a letter. He hoped to come unto them, being able to speak face to face. John was deeply committed to her and the children, and was willing to spend the necessary time to equip them for continued growth and success. (Genuine discipleship takes time and commitment. We too need to commit to taking the time necessary to invest in others, seeking to aid them in their walk with the Lord.)

**B. The Expectation** (12b) – *Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.* John reveals a beautiful aspect of the endearing relationship he enjoyed with them. He expected their face to face meeting to bring joy to all involved. He desired their joy to be full. No doubt the aged apostle had much to offer them, but he also knew the value and joy they brought to him.

- We need to be reminded of the great benefit of fellowship in the faith. Every member of our local body is important and beneficial to the work God has given us to perform. I find joy serving alongside faithful believers. We positively impact each other through the relationships forged over time. There is no greater joy than fellowshiping with God's people, growing together in the faith!

**C. The Cooperation** (13) – *The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.* Closing his letter, John revealed that he wasn't the only one who sought their growth in the Lord. He also sent greetings from her elect sister, clearly another believer or congregation. Either way, this served to remind the elect lady that she and her children were not alone in the good fight of faith. Others shared their passion and commitment to the Gospel, genuinely desiring their prosperity in Christ.

- We need that type of focus today. There is too much jealousy in modern ministry. Our labor for the Lord is not about an individual congregation that gathers at a particular address each week. We are laboring in the harvest with a Kingdom view. We must be willing to pray for the health and success of the church as a whole. I pray the Lord blesses all who seek to serve and honor Him, faithfully proclaiming the truth!

**Conclusion:** We must be willing to heed the words of John. Sound biblical doctrine is essential, and must be guarded at all costs. We should be thankful for all who promote the truth, finding joy in their presence. If you need strength, wisdom, or guidance come to the Lord. Whatever your need, Jesus is the answer!

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<sup>i</sup> Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2 & 3 John; Jude.