

## 2 John: Guarding the Gospel

### Week Two

#### Verse One

- To the elect lady
  - Since the name Electra is unlikely, the word “elect” is meant to describe this community.
  - John’s meaning is that the people of this community were chosen of God, elect by His grace.
  - This is consistent with all other NT writers.
- Whom I love
  - Love is one of the key themes of the letter. The word “love” is used thematically four times.
  - “Whom” is plural. John’s love is not confined to a woman but to a family or community.
  - There is a connection between John and them that allows John to say, “I love you”.
  - John has a deep affection for these people and is interested in their welfare and in their doctrine and practice.
  - It must be assumed that he would have viewed his love for them as an example of the kind of love he would go on to command in his letter.
- In truth
  - John’s love is authentic and sincere. “...whom I love authentically or truly”.
  - John’s love is governed by truth. It is not a love defined by his own personal opinions or by the culture at large but by Truth.
  - Love clearly has parameters or boundary markers that are not culturally or personally defined.
- And not only I, rather also all those who have come to know the truth.
  - John expresses confidence that all those who have come to know the truth love this community or family.
  - Note that John says that “all” in this class would love this lady.

John has an expectation that a bond exists such that all those who have come to know the truth would love this community or family.

○ What does it mean to “have come to know the truth”?

John often uses terms with double meanings. This is the case here. “Truth” likely refers to...

1. The content of the gospel. The body of information that comprises knowledge of God the Father and Jesus Christ the son of the Father and the teachings of Jesus in respect to these things (v 9).
2. Jesus Himself who is the Truth (John 14:6). Jesus is the embodiment of the truth. He is the embodiment of the gospel. He is the message.

Since this is the case, those who have come to know the truth would be authentic believers, those who have had their eyes enlightened by Christ as to the message of Christ.

○ John used the perfect tense, “have come to know” the truth.

The perfect indicates something that has happened in the past and that has continuing results. In other words, these others came to know the truth and still know the truth. The truth had become the governing principle of their lives such that John can be confident to say that they love this lady (this church) and her children (its members).

In essence what John is saying is that all those who have been transformed by the gospel love their spiritual family, and he can say this because he understands the natural bond that exists among all those who belong to Christ.

## Verse Two

- Because of (For the sake of/Through) the truth.
  - It is probably best to take this to mean “because of the truth” instead of “for the sake of the truth”. The preposition more often has this meaning when used with the accusative, and it makes more sense for John to be giving a rationale as to why all those who have come to know the truth love this lady as opposed to saying that this love for her serves the purpose of benefiting the truth somehow.
  - All those who have come to know the truth love this elect lady and they do so because of the truth.

John means...

1. If these people know the truth, that is, if they know the gospel, they will love this elect lady because that is fundamental to the truth of the gospel.
2. More importantly, if they know the truth, they know Christ and Christ dwells in them, and He loves all who are His.

- Which abides or remains in us.
  - To what does the “which” refer?

Clearly to the truth.

- Why say “us” instead of “you” or “them”?

Indwelling or abiding truth is a reality for all of those who have come to know the truth, and this would include the elect lady, all the others who love her, and John himself. There are none who have come to know the truth who do not also have the truth abiding or remaining in them.

- What does it mean to have the truth abiding or remaining in us?

The sentence structure indicates that this is a present and ongoing reality. The truth currently is and will continue to abide or remain in us. This is connected to the love that others have for this elect lady and her children and more fully explains the reason for that love. The truth is currently indwelling those who have come to know it/Him.

This has at least two meanings (cf. John 15, esp. 7)...

1. Those who love this elect lady have come to know the truth such that the gospel has become an ongoing part, indeed the essential part, of their psyche, their governing understanding. This message is “in them” and must therefore permeate all that would constitute their inner person, and it is “in them” in a permanent, ongoing way. It is remaining/dwelling in them, and this reality is the source and motivation for their love.
2. But it is not only a set of propositional truths, as important as they may be, that indwell believers, but it is the very Person of the gospel, the Truth who indwells us. Here again, John is explaining why it is that there will be a love for this community.

- What does it mean that the truth will be with us forever?

Again, this means two things:

1. The message of the gospel will be with us forever, that is, all that is to be known about God and about His amazing work of redemption will be ours forever and will be an ever increasing feast to us throughout eternity.
2. The living Truth, the person of Jesus Christ, will be with us forever, and the knowledge that we gain concerning the gospel will be knowledge of Him and will forever increase our delight in Him as we fellowship with Him and know Him more and more.