2 John: Notes to a Trusted Church

**A reminder on method of interpretation:**

1. *See*. First observe. See what *was*, then-and-there. Below this will be carried out by reading

the text and at points explaining.

2. *Say*. State conclusions faithful to the then-and-there for the here-and-now. Below, sample

(not all) conclusions will be listed in boxes.

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| I. Greeting: John's Love in Truth (1-3)II. John's Joy Yet Concern (4-8)III. John's Warning (9-11)IV. John's Farewell (12-13) |

I. Greeting: John's Love in Truth (1-3)

**2 John 1** The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, **2** because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

**2 John 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.

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| 1. The elder: By name and similarity with 1 and 3 John, John the son of Zebedee is the author. See 1 Peter 5:1 for Peter’s self-designation as “elder.”2. “Not only I, but also all who know the truth”: John voices the same sense of ecclesial solidarity as Paul. Was John perhaps addressing 2 John to the Ephesians congregation, as it would be the distribution center of 1 John? Did Paul’s foundation-laying labor at Ephesus provide the springboard for John’s longer term ministry there?**Eph 4:1**   I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.3. “Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us”: pastoral optimism matters. Notice its grounding in the living God. |

II. John's Joy Yet Concern (4-8)

**2 John 4**   I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. **5** And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. **6** And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. **7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. **8** Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.

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| 1. Note the interplay of truth, commandments, and love—head, hands (feet) and heart. TBC.2. Notice OT reverb. Johannine theology does not introduce a new philosophy of religion. But reconceives OT godliness in the wake of Christ’s fulfillment of the Scriptures and presence with believers via “the truth” of Christ abiding with them.3. Concern: deceivers. They are many. They feature defective representation of Jesus Christ. Any such person is a “strayer” or one who causes others to stray.4. Watch yourselves: Christian assurance comes about through consistent dedication over time. |

III. John's Warning (9-11)

**9** Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, **11** for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

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| 1. “Goes on ahead” = is guilty of what John warns against.2. The teaching = the truth. The teaching by and about Christ is an indicator of possessing God or not.3. Do not greet or host: probably refers to traveling missionaries like Gaius is commended for hosting in 3 John 5–8. Where the gospel flourishes, there will always be rivals and counterfeits. |

IV. John's Farewell (12-13)

**2 John 12**   Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

**2 John 13**   The children of your elect sister greet you.

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| 1. Largely repeats ending of 3 John.2. “Joy complete”: echoes Jesus’ sentiment in the FG. The Beloved Disciple carries on heritage of what he and Jesus shared.John 3:29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this **joy** of mine is now complete.John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your **joy** may be full.John 16:20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into **joy**. 21 When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for **joy** that a human being has been born into the world. 22 So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your **joy** from you.John 16:24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your **joy** may be full.John 17:13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my **joy** fulfilled in themselves. |