

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

2 John: The Exclusionary Limits Of Fellowship With God In The Local Church Part I: Valuing True Spiritual Local Church Fellowship Toward Setting Its Exclusionary Limits (2 John 1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. When the believer spiritually fellowships with the Lord, and other believers do likewise, not only is there a fellowship between God and these believers, but a host of blessings in fellowship with one another.
- B. That fellowship that exists in Biblical churches is valuable and worth protecting on the human level, and 2 John 1-6 expands on the value of this practical, interpersonal fellowship that is so worth guarding:

II. Valuing True Spiritual Local Church Fellowship Toward Setting Its Exclusionary Limits, 2 John 1-6.

- A. John's epistle "to the chosen lady" (2 John 1a NIV) initially seems to be written to a woman, but "the writer drops the singular number for his pronouns after verse 5 and uses a singular again only in verse 13" to refer to the "lady" and her "sister," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 905. The letter was thus written to a church personified as a "lady," and her "children" (2 John 1b) are individual believers in that church, *Ibid*.
- B. Thus, as John's key concern in this letter was to draw an exclusionary limit to the fellowship of believers in a local church (2 John 10-11; John G. Mitchell, Fellowship: Three Letters From John, 1974, p. 176), we note how he describes the encompassing value of the truth in the local church behind its fellowship:
 - 1. First, we believers are "chosen" in Christ, elect and favored of God with all spiritual blessings accorded that position due to the truth that is in Christ, 2 John 1a, b with 1 Peter 1:1-2; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13.
 - 2. Second, all believers, apostles or otherwise, love one another as local churches, or as individual believers in these local churches in the sphere of the truth that is in Christ, 2 John 1b.
 - 3. Third, the **reason** (*dia* with the accusative case = "because," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 827; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Engl. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 178-180) believers love one another in the truth in Christ is that this truth gives us the logical and spiritual basis for our fellowship in God, 2 John 2a NIV.
 - 4. Fourth, that truth that is in Christ that provides a basis of spiritual fellowship among believers in Christ lives in us personified in the Person of God the Holy Spirit of truth, making this indwelling and its enabling the practical basis to relate effectively to one another 2 John 2b; John 14:16-17; Rom. 5:1-5.
 - 5. Fifth, this Spirit of truth is not transitory, for He both indwells us now and will be with us forever, providing the eternal basis for eternal fellowship with one another, 2 John 2c; John 14:16.
 - 6. Sixth, the grace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is administered to us believers in the sphere of God's love and truth, beginning with the truth of the salvation gospel, 2 John 3a, d. We need that truth to benefit from God's grace both in salvation and in empowerment for the spiritual life.
 - 7. Seventh, the mercy (*eleos*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 827) of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is administered to us believers in the sphere of God's love and truth, 2 John 3b, d. As this mercy is the quality of God that compassionately addresses the "misery which is the consequence of . . . sins" (Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the N. T., 1973, p. 169), only because of God's truth in Christ can we enjoy God's compassionate deliverances of us from the misery sin has produced in our lives for us!
 - 8. Eighth, the peace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is administered to us believers in the sphere of God's love and truth, 2 John 3c. Without that truth, we would not enjoy God's peace.
 - 9. Ninth, God has commanded that we Christians walk in the truth that is in Christ in our lives, 2 John 4b. Thus, without that truth, we would not be able to obey God's commands and thus be blessed by Him.
 - 10. Tenth, in thus walking in Christ's revealed truth, we cause one another great joy in Christ, 2 John 4a.
 - 11. Eleventh, we believers are to love one another by means of walking after God's commandments, meaning the way we are to express our fellowship love with one another is through the means of our mutual obedience to the Lord's truth in our lives and relationships, 2 Jn. 5-6a. We thus need the truth.
 - 12. Twelfth, this command about walking in the truth and its expression of love toward one another is timeless in the Church era: it was given by Christ at the beginning of the Church era, and it continues and will continue, making it imperative that we stick to God's plan of fellowship in the truth, 2 Jn. 6b.

Lesson Application: The truth we have in Christ is the basis for all we possess and treasure in salvation and in relating with God and one another, so it is essential that we guard that truth in the local church.