

SERIES: II JOHN: LOVING AND LIVING THE TRUTH,
WEEK 1

TITLE: THE TRUTH

TEXT: II JOHN 1:1-3

INTRODUCTION: (1) THE LETTERS OF SECOND AND THIRD JOHN ARE THE SHORTEST BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, SHORTER EVEN THAN PHILEMON AND JUDE, WHICH EACH HAVE ONLY ONE CHAPTER.

* MOREOVER, EACH OF JOHN'S SECOND AND THIRD LETTERS CONTAINS LESS THAN 300 GREEK WORDS, WHICH COULD HAVE FIT ON A SINGLE PAPYRUS SHEET IN THAT DAY.

** HOWEVER, SECOND AND THIRD JOHN'S BREVITY DO NOT COMMUNICATE LESS IMPORTANCE, FOR THEY BOTH ARE SIGNIFICANT BOOKS PLACED IN THE CANON OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AND ARE THE WORD OF GOD.

*** NOW WHY ARE THESE BOOKS SIGNIFICANT AND WHAT THEMES AND TRUTHS DO THEY COMMUNICATE?

**** WELL, SPECIFICALLY II JOHN ADDRESSES SOME OF JOHN'S CONCERNS ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS WITH A NEW TWIST.

(2) FOR JOHN WOULD REMIND THE CHURCHES IN II JOHN V. 7 THAT "MANY DECEIVERS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD, THOSE WHO DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE JESUS CHRIST AS COMING IN THE FLESH. THIS IS THE DECEIVER AND THE ANTICHRIST."

* NOW IN HIS FIRST LETTER OR EPISTLE JOHN CALLED THESE FALSE TEACHERS "ANTICHRISTS," "FALSE PROPHETS" AND THOSE WHO TRY TO DECEIVE YOU, "DECEIVERS."

** AND THESE FALSE TEACHERS LEFT THE CHURCH, THE FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS, BUT WERE KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH BELIEVERS AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY AS THEY SPREAD THEIR VENOMOUS LIES.

*** LET ME EXPLAIN. THERE ARE SEVERAL HOSPITALITY COMMANDS IN THE N.T. WHICH HAVE TO DO WITH ENTERTAINING STRANGERS, HOUSING TRAVELERS AND HELPING BELIEVERS AND OTHERS WHO WERE

TRAVELING BECAUSE OF THE DANGERS OF TRAVELING AS INNS OF THAT DAY WERE NOT MORAL AND RESPECTABLE DECENT PLACES TO STAY, PLUS THEY WERE SCARCE AND EXPENSIVE.

**** THUS WE HAVE COMMANDS LIKE ROMANS 12:13 (QUOTE IT). ALSO QUOTE I PETER 4:9 AND I TIMOTHY 3:2.

(3) AND THEN HEBREWS 13:2 SAYS: “DO NOT NEGLECT TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS, FOR BY THIS SOME HAVE ENTERTAINED ANGELS WITHOUT KNOWING IT.”

* NOW ALL OF THESE TEXTS REMIND US TO USE OUR APARTMENTS AND HOMES AS PLACES OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

** BUT IN THAT DAY, THIS EXTENSION OF HOSPITALITY WAS OPEN TO ABUSE, SO DISCERNMENT NEEDED TO BE APPLIED.

*** FOR EXAMPLE, SUPPOSE A VISITING TEACHER OR A PROPHET OR A QUOTE MINISTER OF CHRIST TAUGHT WHAT WAS CLEARLY FALSE DOCTRINE LIKE THE PRE-GNOSTICS, THE FALSE TEACHERS THAT JOHN HAS ADDRESSED.

**** WHAT WOULD BE A PERSON'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOSPITALITY IN THAT CIRCUMSTANCE? FOR ON ONE HAND, THE HOSPITALITY COMMANDS WOULD DEMAND THAT HE BE PROVIDED FOR, BUT TO DO SO WOULD SEEM TO BE PARTICIPATION IN THE SPREAD OF FALSE TEACHING.

(4) SHOULD THAT PERSON BE RECEIVED OR NOT? OR SUPPOSE THE TEACHER OVERSTAYED HIS WELCOME OR ASKED FOR MONEY?

* WELL, JOHN ADDRESSES THE ISSUE OF HOSPITALITY AND SOUND TEACHING IN II JOHN V. 10 WHERE HE SAID: (QUOTE IT).

** AND FURTHER IN II JOHN, THE LADY TO WHOM JOHN WRITES TO IN ONE OF THE CHURCHES APPEARS TO HAVE INADVERTENTLY OR UNWISELY SHOWN THESE FALSE TEACHERS HOSPITALITY.

*** SO JOHN LOVINGLY CORRECTS HER AS A MODEL FOR ALL BELIEVERS AGAINST PARTICIPATING IN HOSPITALITY FOR FALSE TEACHERS, FOR THAT WOULD BE TO PARTICIPATE AND SUPPORT THEIR EVIL DEEDS.

**** AND JOHN IN ESSENCE WILL COMMUNICATE IN II JOHN THAT GENUINE CHRISTIAN TEACHERS AND MINISTERS

CAN BE RECOGNIZED BY THE MESSAGE THEY BRING AND BY THE MOTIVE THAT DRIVES THEM.

(5) WITH THAT SAID, SOME MORE QUICK BACKGROUND TO II JOHN.

* JOHN OF COURSE IS THE HUMAN AUTHOR OF II JOHN, AND WAS INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WRITE 5 NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS, THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND HIS 3 EPISTLES, FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD JOHN.

** NEXT IN BACKGROUND, THE DATE OF THE WRITING OF THIS EPISTLE WOULD BE BETWEEN A.D. 90-95 SHORTLY AFTER THE WRITING OF I JOHN FROM THE CITY OF EPHESUS.

*** NEXT, THE KEY VERSES WOULD BE II JOHN VERSES 9&10 WHICH COMMUNICATE:

V. 9 – “ANYONE WHO GOES TOO FAR AND DOES NOT ABIDE IN THE TEACHING OF CHRIST, DOES NOT HAVE GOD; THE ONE WHO ABIDES IN THE TEACHING, HE HAS BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SON.

V. 10 – IF ANYONE COMES TO YOU AND DOES NOT BRING THIS TEACHING, DO NOT RECEIVE HIM INTO YOUR HOUSE, AND DO NOT GIVE HIM A GREETING.”

**** AND THESE VERSES HIGHLIGHT SOME OF JOHN'S REASONS FOR WRITING THIS EPISTLE.

(6) WHICH LEADS TO AN OUTLINE FOR THE BOOK BY JOHN MACARTHUR IN HIS STUDY BIBLE AND HIS COMMENTARY ON FIRST THROUGH THIRD JOHN.

* AND THE OUTLINE HAS 4 MAJOR POINTS IN THE 13 VERSES OF II JOHN.

NO. 1 THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY, VV. 1-3

NO. 2 THE BEHAVIOR OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY, VV. 4-6

NO. 3 THE BOUNDS OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY, VV. 7-11

NO. 4 THE BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY, VV. 12&13

** AND WITH THAT OUTLINE BEFORE US, TWO LAST THINGS IN BACKGROUND FOR THIS BOOK.

*** THE KEY WORDS FOUND IN II JOHN ARE THE WORD TRUTH USED 5 TIMES, THE WORD LOVE USED 4 TIMES AND THEN THE WORD COMMANDMENT AND COMMANDMENTS USED 4 TIMES.

**** AND FINALLY FROM THESE KEY WORDS I'VE TITLED OUR APPROXIMATE 4 SUNDAY STUDY OF II JOHN "LOVING AND LIVING THE TRUTH."

(7) FOR THE WORD TRUTH IS THE KEY WORD AND IDEA IN II JOHN AND WILL BE USED 4 TIMES IN THE FIRST 3 VERSES OF II JOHN WHICH WILL BE THE EXTENT OF OUR STUDY TODAY.

* THEREFORE I'VE TITLED OUR STUDY TODAY OF II JOHN VERSES 1-3, "THE TRUTH" AND WE'LL LOOK AT 3 POINTS.

** NO. 1 THE BELOVED, SPEAKING OF THE CHOSEN LADY THAT JOHN IS WRITING TO, V. 1A; NO. 2 THE BOND OF THE TRUTH, VV. 1B&2; AND NO. 3 THE BLESSING OF GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE, V. 3.

*** AND WITH ALL THAT BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION BEFORE US, LET'S JUMP INTO THE TEXT BY LOOKING AT V. 1A, WHERE WE'LL SEE, THE BELOVED. LOOK AT V. 1A PLEASE.

I. THE BELOVED, (READ V. 1A)

A. NOW JOHN THE BELOVED, WAS THE LAST SURVIVING APOSTLE. AND BY THE TIME HE WAS INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WRITE THIS EPISTLE, APPROXIMATELY 60 YEARS HAD PASSED SINCE JESUS DIED, ROSE AGAIN AND ASCENDED TO HEAVEN.

* THEREFORE JOHN WAS AN OLDER MAN AT THE TIME OF THE WRITING OF THIS EPISTLE, HE WAS AN ELDERLY MAN, A SENIOR CITIZEN.

** WELL HE BEGINS THIS EPISTLE WITH THIS TITLE OF ADVANCED AGE, THE ELDER. FOR EVERYONE HE WROTE TO WOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT HE WAS AN OLDER APOSTLE, THE LAST APOSTLE, A SENIOR PERSON DESERVING RESPECT.

*** SO HE STARTS OFF WITH THE WORDS THE ELDER, NOT AN ELDER TALKING ABOUT THE OFFICE OF PASTOR OR OVERSEER, BUT THE ELDER, A DESIGNATION FOR ADVANCED AGE.

**** WITH THAT SAID, TO WHOM DOES JOHN WRITE TO? WELL AS WE MOVE ON IN V. 1, "TO THE CHOSEN LADY AND HER CHILDREN," AND THE KJV, NKJV AND THE ESV SAY TO OR UNTO "THE ELECT LADY AND HER CHILDREN."

1. NOW SOME COMMENTATORS THAT I STUDIED BELIEVE THE PHRASE "THE CHOSEN OR ELECT LADY" REFERS METAPHORICALLY TO A LOCAL CHURCH AND HER CHILDREN REFER TO THE MEMBERS OF THAT CHURCH. AND THAT CERTAINLY IS A POSSIBILITY.

* BUT THE MORE NATURAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE FLOW OF THE CONTEXT IS TO INTERPRET CHOSEN LADY

AND HER CHILDREN AS AN ACTUAL WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN.

** A WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN WHO WERE WELL KNOWN BY THE CHURCHES AND POSSIBLY HOSTED A CHURCH IN HER HOME SINCE THERE WERE NO CHURCH BUILDINGS AT THIS TIME.

*** AND MOST LIKELY THIS WOMAN WAS A WIDOW FOR NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT HER HUSBAND, BUT WAS A WOMAN OF HOSPITALITY, HOSTING AND CARING FOR PROFESSING CHRISTIAN TRAVELERS, UNFORTUNATELY SOME THAT WERE NOT SOUND IN DOCTRINE.

**** FOR JOHN WILL SAY TO HER IN V. 10: (QUOTE IT).

2. BEYOND THAT, IT WOULD BE UNNATURAL TO COMMUNICATE A METAPHOR OR FIGURE OF SPEECH THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE IMPORTED TO CLOSE THE BOOK TALKING ABOUT THIS WOMAN'S SISTER AND HER CHILDREN, HER NIECES AND NEPHEWS.

* AND THEN FINALLY, THE CHANGE FROM THE SINGULAR FORM OF THE PERSONAL PRONOUN "YOU" IN V. 5, "NOW I ASK YOU, LADY" TO THE PLURAL FORM IN V. 12 FLOWS MORE NATURALLY TO A WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN THAN TO A CHURCH AND ITS MEMBERS.

** THEREFORE I TAKE THE MORE NATURAL, LITERAL, CONTEXTUAL MEANING OF THE WORDS HERE TO TALK ABOUT A REAL WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN WHO WILL BE LOVINGLY ADMONISHED FOR BEING HOSPITABLE TO FALSE TEACHERS, THE HERETIC PRE-GNOSTICS.

*** THIS WOMAN IS BELOVED BY JOHN AND THE REST OF THE CHURCH AND WELL KNOWN FOR HER ZEAL FOR HOSPITALITY.

*** NOW ONE LAST THING BEFORE I MOVE ON TO MY SECOND POINT. JOHN CALLS THIS LADY, THE CHOSEN LADY.

**** AND THE WORD CHOSEN OR ELECT DEPENDING ON WHICH TRANSLATION YOU HAVE IS THE GREEK WORD EK-LEK-TOCE FROM WHICH WE GET THE WORD ELECTION AND LIT. MEANS PICKED OUT OR CHOSEN BY GOD, OR CHOICE, OR SELECT.

3. AND A SYNONYM FOR THIS WORD CHOSEN OR ELECT IS A BELIEVER, A CHILD OF GOD, A CHRISTIAN, ONE WHO IS SAVED, BORN AGAIN.

* FOR WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN? A CHRISTIAN IS A PERSON CHOSEN BY GOD, ELECTED BY GOD FOR SALVATION.

** AND THAT IS HOW THIS GREEK WORD IS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

*** FOR EXAMPLE IN MARK 13:20 IT SAYS: “UNLESS THE LORD HAD SHORTENED THOSE DAYS, NO LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN SAVED; BUT FOR THE SAKE OF THE ELECT, WHOM HE CHOSE, HE SHORTENED THE DAYS.”

**** IN ROMANS 8:33 IN TALKING ABOUT BELIEVERS IT SAYS: “WHO WILL BRING A CHARGE AGAINST GOD’S ELECT? GOD IS THE ONE WHO JUSTIFIES.”

4. IN COLOSSIANS 3:12 IT SAYS: “SO, AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN OF GOD, HOLY AND BELOVED, PUT ON A HEART OF COMPASSION, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, GENTLENESS AND PATIENCE.”

* IN II TIMOTHY 2:10 PAUL SAID: “FOR THIS REASON I ENDURE ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE WHO ARE CHOSEN, SO THAT THEY ALSO MAY OBTAIN THE SALVATION WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS AND WITH IT ETERNAL GLORY.”

** IN TITUS 1:1 PAUL SAID: “PAUL, A BOND-SERVANT OF GOD AND AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, FOR THE FAITH OF THOSE CHOSEN OF GOD AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH WHICH IS ACCORDING TO GODLINESS.”

*** PETER SAID IN I PETER 1:1 – “PETER, AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, TO THOSE WHO RESIDE AS ALIENS,

SCATTERED THROUGHOUT PONTUS, GALATIA, CAPPADOCIA, ASIA, AND BITHYNIA, WHO ARE CHOSEN.”

**** AND THEN PETER SAID IN I PETER 2:9 IN SPEAKING TO BELIEVERS – “BUT YOU ARE A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD’S OWN POSSESSION, SO THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM WHO HAS CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT.”

5. NOW WHO ARE BELIEVERS, THE SAVED, THE CHILDREN OF GOD? THEY ARE ONES CHOSEN, ELECTED BY GOD FOR SALVATION, A BIBLICAL TRUTH THAT GOD SOVEREIGNLY CHOOSES PEOPLE FOR SALVATION.

* AND UNLIKE THOSE WHO DO NOT ALLOW GOD TO BE GOD AND WHO HOLD A WATERED DOWN VIEW OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS DO NOT HESITATE TO REFER TO BELIEVERS AS THE ELECT, THE CHOSEN ONES OF GOD.

** IN FACT, IN MATTHEW 24:22, THIS IS A TERM THAT CHRIST USES HIMSELF TO TALK ABOUT HIS PEOPLE, FOR MATTHEW 24:22 SAYS: “UNLESS THOSE DAYS HAD BEEN CUT SHORT, NO LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN SAVED; BUT FOR THE SAKE OF THE ELECT THOSE DAYS WILL BE CUT SHORT.”

*** NOW MY POINT IS, DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE THIS GREAT BIBLICAL WORD, PREGNANT WITH TRUTH TO TALK ABOUT A TRUE CHRISTIAN, FOR WE THAT ARE BELIEVERS BY SOVEREIGN GRACE ARE GOD'S ELECT, HIS CHOSEN ONES. AND JOHN CALLS THE DEAR LADY HE IS WRITING TO, THE CHOSEN LADY OR THE ELECT LADY, AND WILL USE THE SAME WORD TO CLOSE THIS SMALL BOOK IN V. 13 TO TALK ABOUT THIS WOMAN'S SISTER, "YOUR CHOSEN OR ELECT SISTER."

**** THIS LADY AND HER SISTER ARE THE BELOVED, AS IS EVERY TRUE BELIEVER.

5. BUT MOVING ON FROM THE BELOVED, OUR 2'D POINT TODAY IS THE BOND. LOOK BACK AT V. 1 PLEASE.

II. THE BOND, (READ V. 1)

A. NOW BEGINNING IN THE 2'D HALF OF V. 1 INTO V. 2, JOHN WILL TALK ABOUT THE BOND OF LOVE IN TRUTH THAT HE HAS FOR THIS CHOSEN LADY AND HER FAMILY.

* AND FIRST OF ALL, IT WAS NOT INAPPROPRIATE THAT JOHN EXPRESSES LOVE FOR THIS LADY AND HER CHILDREN.

** FOR THE PARTICULAR WORD THAT JOHN WAS LED TO USE HERE IS THE GREEK VERB AGAPAO NOT PHILEO.

*** AND HAD JOHN USED THE PHILEO, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPRESSING A HUMAN FONDNESS FOR HER, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN INAPPROPRIATE FOR AN APOSTLE.

**** BUT JOHN TELLS HER THAT HE LOVES HER AND HER CHILDREN WITH A CHRISTIAN LOVE, A LOVE PRODUCED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, A PURE, SELF-SACRIFICIAL GOD LIKE LOVE DEVOID OF ANY SEXUAL OVERTONES.

1. IN FACT, IT'S AS IF HE SAID TO THE LADY AND HER FAMILY, "I LOVE YOU IN THE LORD."

* AND JOHN IS ADDRESSING THIS AGAPO LOVE TO THIS LADY AND HER CHILDREN FOR THE PRONOUN WHOM IS PLURAL AND ENCOMPASSES OR INCLUDES BOTH THE LADY AND HER CHILDREN.

** BUT JOHN DOESN'T STOP THERE, FOR HE SAYS, "WHOM I LOVE IN TRUTH."

*** AND THE PHRASE "IN TRUTH" QUALIFIES AND EXPLAINS THE SPHERE OF HIS LOVE FOR THEM.

**** IN OTHER WORDS, TRUTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. IT IS WHAT BINDS US TOGETHER IN CHORDS THAT CANNOT BE BROKEN.

**** BUT UNDERSTAND THAT THIS BOND OF LOVE IS NOT ONLY BETWEEN JOHN AND THIS WOMAN AND HER FAMILY, BUT AT THE END OF V. 1, "BUT ALSO ALL WHO KNOW THE TRUTH."

2. AND BELOVED, WHAT BINDS THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH TOGETHER IS A COMMON COMMITMENT TO THE TRUTH.

* IT IS TO SAY, IT WAS THE TRUTH THAT BOUND NOT ONLY JOHN, BUT ALL WHO KNEW THE TRUTH TO THIS LADY AND HER CHILDREN, WHICH WAS THEIR COMMON BELIEF IN THE GOSPEL TRUTH FROM THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH UNTIES ALL TRUE BELIEVERS.

** AND THESE PROFOUND PHRASES IN V. 1 "IN TRUTH" AND "THE TRUTH" CONDENSE OR SUMMARIZE THE MAIN THEME OF SECOND JOHN, THAT TRUTH MUST ALWAYS GOVERN THE EXERCISE OF LOVE.

*** FOR A BELIEVER'S DEEP MUTUAL LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER FLOWS OUT OF THEIR SHARED COMMITMENT TO THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD AND THE GOSPEL.

**** THEREFORE TRUTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LOVE AND UNITY.

3. AND THERE CAN BE NO REAL CHRISTIAN UNITY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE TRUTH. AND ANY UNITY WITH OTHERS NOT BASED ON THE TRUTH IS NOT CHRISTIAN UNITY. RIGHT BELIEF, RIGHT DOCTRINE UNITES CHRISTIANS. WE HAVE LOVE FOR THE TRUTH WHICH BINDS US TOGETHER IN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

* AND SENTIMENTALISM AND GOOD FEELINGS AND VIBES WILL NOT BIND US TOGETHER WHEN DIFFICULTY COMES, BUT LOVE FOR THE TRUTH OF GOSPEL WILL.

** AND THERE CAN BE NO REAL CHRISTIAN UNITY AT THE EXPENSE OF TRUTH.

*** TO MINIMIZE THE TRUTH IN THE NAME OF LOVE IS TO ABANDON TRUE BIBLICAL LOVE WHICH IS BASED ON THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD.

**** AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THE BASIS OF TRUE CHRISTIAN LOVE THEN IS THE UNCHANGING TRUTH OF

GOD'S WORD FROM WHICH SOUND DOCTRINE COMES. THEREFORE THE TITLE OF OUR SERIES IN II JOHN, LOVING AND LIVING THE TRUTH AND THE TITLE OF OUR MESSAGE TODAY WHICH COMMUNICATES THE WORD TRUTH FOUR TIMES.

4. AND THE WORDS "THE TRUTH" ARE USED AGAIN IN V. 2 WHICH BRINGS ABOUT THE BOND WE HAVE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. LOOK AT V. 2 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 2. NOW IN KEEPING WITH HIS PASSIONATE UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO THE TRUTH IN CONTRAST TO THE HERETICS AND FALSE TEACHERS THAT HAD INFILTRATED THE CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR IN THAT DAY,

* IN KEEPING WITH THIS COMMITMENT TO THE TRUTH, WE SEE IN THE BEGINNING OF V. 2 THAT JOHN WROTE THIS SHORT LETTER "FOR THE SAKE OF THE TRUTH."

** AND JOHN'S BURDEN AND CONCERN WAS THAT THIS CHOSEN LADY TO WHOM HE ADDRESSED THIS LETTER, MIGHT NOT COMPROMISE TRUTH IN THE NAME OF HOSPITALITY AND LOVE.

*** MOREOVER IT APPEARS SHE HAD ALREADY COMPROMISED TRUTH UNDER THE HEADING OF LOVE AS WE WILL SEE LATER ON IN THE BOOK.

**** BUT JOHN LINKS LOVE AND TRUTH, AND THEY ARE CLEARLY COMPATIBLE, THEY ARE CEMENTED TOGETHER. AND LOVE THAT IS NOT ROOTED IN TRUTH IS SENTIMENTALISM AND LEADS TO COMPROMISE, AS IT DID WITH THIS DEAR LADY.

1. SO JOHN WROTE THIS LETTER FOR THE SAKE OF THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH ABIDES IN THE TRUE BELIEVER AND WILL BE WITH US FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE END OF VERSE 2.

* JOHN STOTT WROTE MANY YEARS AGO BEFORE HE FELL INTO THE ERROR OF ANNIHILATIONISM THAT AND I QUOTE: "SO LONG AS THE TRUTH ENDURES, IN US AND WITH US, SO LONG SHALL OUR RECIPROCAL LOVE ALSO ENDURE. MOREOVER, SINCE CHRISTIAN LOVE IS FOUNDED UPON CHRISTIAN TRUTH, WE SHALL NOT INCREASE THE LOVE WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN US BY DIMINISHING THE TRUTH WHICH WE HOLD IN COMMON. IN CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS TOWARDS CHURCH UNITY WE MUST NEVER COMPROMISE THE VERY TRUTH ON WHICH ALONE TRUE LOVE AND UNITY DEPEND." (END QUOTE)

** AND TRUE BELIEVER, TRUTH ABIDES OR RESIDES IN US, AND WILL BE WITH US FOREVER. AND THIS IS A CONFIDENT ASSERTION BY JOHN AND CAN BE RENDERED, "WITH US IT SHALL BE." THERE IS NO DOUBT, THIS IS EMPHATIC.

*** THEREFORE THE TRUTH OF THE WORD OF GOD, FROM WHICH WE WERE BORN AGAIN, THROUGH GOSPEL TRUTH WILL NOT LEAVE US AND THEREFORE TRUE BELIEVERS PERSEVERE AND DO NOT FORSAKE THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD AS THE FALSE TEACHERS DID AT THIS TIME.

**** FALSE TEACHERS ABANDON THE TRUTH, BUT TRUE BELIEVERS ADHERE TO THE TRUTH AND PERSEVERE BY GRACE. AND GRACE WILL BE THE FIRST WORD IN V. 3 WHICH LEADS US TO OUR THIRD AND FINAL POINT TODAY, THE BLESSING. LOOK AT V. 3 PLEASE.

III. THE BLESSING, (READ V. 3)

A. NOW THE BLESSING OF GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE IS NOT SOMETHING THAT JOHN IS PRAYING FOR, FOR THESE BELIEVERS, FOR JOHN IS ASSURING THEM OF THESE RICH BLESSINGS. HE SAYS THESE TRIAD OF DIVINE BLESSINGS "WILL BE WITH US."

* NOW SPECIFICALLY WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT HERE AS THESE 3 WORDS ARE USED?

** WELL, IAN HAMILTON SAID AND I QUOTE FROM HIS LITTLE COMMENTARY ON THE LETTERS OF JOHN: "GRACE IS UNDESERVED KINDNESS TO JUDGMENT – DESERVING SINNERS, GOD GIVING US WHAT WE COULD

NEVER DESERVE, HIS OWN SON. MERCY STANDS IN CONTRAST WITH WHAT OUR SINS POSITIVELY DESERVE, GOD'S RIGHTEOUS WRATH AND JUDGMENT. PEACE IS MORE THAN MERELY THE ABSENCE OF HOSTILITY. GOD'S PEACE, HIS 'SHALOM' SPEAKS OF HIS PLEDGED COMMITMENT TO MAKE US WHOLE, TO RESTORE US AND TO RECONCILE US TO HIMSELF, OVERCOMING EVERY OBSTACLE TO SECURE OUR EVERLASTING BLESSEDNESS. PEACE IS SALVATION IN ITS FULLEST EXPRESSION. JOHN IS NOT PRAYING THAT THESE RICH BLESSINGS WILL BE WITH THEM; RATHER, HE IS ASSURING HIS READERS THAT THEY WILL CERTAINLY BE WITH THEM." (END QUOTE)

*** NOW I WOULD CALL GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE THE BESTOWAL OF A GREAT BLESSING UPON BELIEVERS.

**** FURTHERMORE, "GRACE REMOVES GUILT, MERCY REMOVES MISERY AND PEACE EXPRESSES A CONTINUANCE OF GRACE AND MERCY" ACCORDING TO JOHN ALBERT BENGEL.

1. JOHN MACARTHUR SAID IN HIS COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES OF JOHN: "THE 3 TERMS SUMMARIZE THE PROGRESSION OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION: GOD'S GRACE CAUSED HIM TO GRANT MERCY, WHICH RESULTS IN PEACE. GRACE VIEWS SINNERS AS GUILTY AND UNDESERVING; MERCY VIEWS THEM AS NEEDY AND

HELPLESS AND PEACE IS THE RESULT OF GOD'S OUTPOURING OF BOTH." (END QUOTE)

* AND ONE MORE QUOTE, WILLIAM MCDONALD IN HIS ONE VOLUME COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE SIMPLY SAID: "GRACE IS UNDESERVED FAVOR TO THOSE WHO DESERVE THE OPPOSITE. MERCY IS PITY SHOWN TO THOSE WHO ARE GUILTY AND WRETCHED, PEACE IS THE HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP THAT RESULTS FROM GOD'S GRACE AND MERCY." (END QUOTE)

** NOW WITH THOSE GREAT BLESSINGS DEFINED, WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

*** WELL, AS WE MOVE ON IN V. 3, "FROM GOD THE FATHER AND FROM JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF THE FATHER."

**** AND NOTE THAT THE PREPOSITION "FROM" IS USED TWICE HERE, BEFORE GOD THE FATHER, AND BEFORE JESUS CHRIST. AND THE TWO-FOLD REPETITION OF "FROM" STRESSES JESUS' EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER. THEY ARE ON THE SAME LEVEL.

2. IT IS TO SAY WE SEE THE EQUALITY OF THE SON WITH THE FATHER AS THE FOUNT AND SOURCE OF ALL BLESSING. JESUS IS GOD THE SON, AND THIS COMMUNICATES CHRIST'S DEITY WHICH THE FALSE TEACHERS THAT JOHN IS DEALING WITH DENIED.

* AND JOHN WILL EMPHASIZE ALSO HERE THE TRUTH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS “THE SON OF THE FATHER” WHICH THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE DENYING.

** SO THE FOUNT OR SOURCE OF THE BLESSING OF GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE COMES FROM GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON.

*** AND THEN FINALLY JOHN ADDS AT THE END OF V. 3 “IN TRUTH AND LOVE.”

**** AND GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE WHOSE SOURCE IS GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON ARE PRESENT WHEN DIVINE TRUTH DOMINATES THE MIND AND HEART, RESULTING IN GENUINE LOVE.

3. JOHN STRESSES TRUTH AND LOVE BECAUSE THEY ARE THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THESE BLESSINGS ARE RECEIVED.

* TRUTH SHOULD MAKE OUR LOVE DISCRIMINATING, FOR OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS IS NOT TO UNDERMINE OUR LOYALTY TO THE TRUTH. THEREFORE IN V. 4 WHICH LORD WILLING WE’LL LOOK AT NEXT SUNDAY, WE WILL SEE THE PHRASE WALKING IN TRUTH WHICH IS THE WAY EVERY TRUE BELIEVER IS TO LOVE, LOVING AND LIVING IN THE TRUTH.

IN WRAP UP: (1) IN APPLICATION, I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE TITLE OF OUR MESSAGE TODAY, "THE TRUTH."

* THE REASON BEING, IN OUR DAY TRUTH IS OFTEN UNDERSTOOD NOT IN TERMS OF RIGHT OR WRONG, BUT IN RELATIVE TERMS.

** FOR RELATIVISM DOMINATES WESTERN THINKING.

*** AND WHEN I TALK ABOUT RELATIVISM, I'M TALKING ABOUT A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE THAT ETHICAL TRUTHS DEPEND ON WHAT WE THINK AND THAT WE ARE THE FINAL AUTHORITY. WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG IS RELATIVE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE.

**** THEREFORE PEOPLE DO NOT SEE THE BIBLE AS THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR LIFE NOR DO PEOPLE THINK OF TRUTH AS GOD DEFINES IT.

(2) HENCE, RELATIVISM AND COMMANDMENTS FROM GOD DO NOT GO TOGETHER.

* FOR IF YOU LIVE LIKE A RELATIVIST, YOU CANNOT SAY THAT IT IS ALWAYS WRONG TO COMMIT ADULTERY OR RIGHT TO LIVE A PURE LIFE. YOU CANNOT SAY THAT IT IS ALWAYS WRONG TO STEAL AND RIGHT TO LIVE HONESTLY.

** RELATIVISM CAN ONLY SAY, THERE ARE CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS THAT DETERMINE WHETHER SOMETHING IS RIGHT OR WRONG.

*** THEREFORE, ADULTERY OR THEFT OR MURDER MAY BE RIGHT IN ONE CIRCUMSTANCE AND WRONG IN ANOTHER. IT MAY BE WRONG TODAY AND RIGHT TOMORROW.

**** BUT THIS IS NOT WHAT THE BIBLE COMMUNICATES FOR THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, IS TRUTH, IT IS THE TRUTH, AND JESUS IS THE TRUTH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND GOD IS THE FATHER OF TRUTH.

(3) AND WHATEVER IS CONTRARY TO GOD'S WORD OF TRUTH IS WRONG AND WHEN JOHN IN OUR TEXT TODAY SPEAKS OF TRUTH 4 TIMES, HE SPEAKS OF ABSOLUTE TRUTH.

* FOR THE BIBLE IS SOMETHING THAT IS TRUE FOR ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, FOR EVERY SITUATION, AT ALL TIMES, BECAUSE IT IS GOD'S REVEALED TRUTH.

** SO BELIEVER, MAY WE NOT WAVER OR COMPROMISE THE TRUTH. MAY WE LOVE AND LIVE THE TRUTH, MAY WE KNOW THE TRUTH, MAY WE STUDY THE TRUTH, MAY WE MEMORIZE THE TRUTH AND MAY WE OBEY THE TRUTH – GOD'S WORD.

*** JESUS SAID IN JOHN 17:17: (QUOTE IT).

**** AND IT IS THROUGH THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD THAT BELIEVERS ARE SANCTIFIED. AND IT IS THROUGH THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORDS THAT SINNERS ARE SAVED.

(4) AND IF YOU KNOW GOD'S GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE TODAY, STAND ON AND LIVE THE TRUTH.

* AND IF YOU ARE HERE WITHOUT CHRIST TODAY, REPENT OF YOUR SINS AND RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR, THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FORGIVE YOUR SIN.

** TRUTH IS NOT RELATIVE, IT IS A BOOK WE HAVE, THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD. (LET'S PRAY)