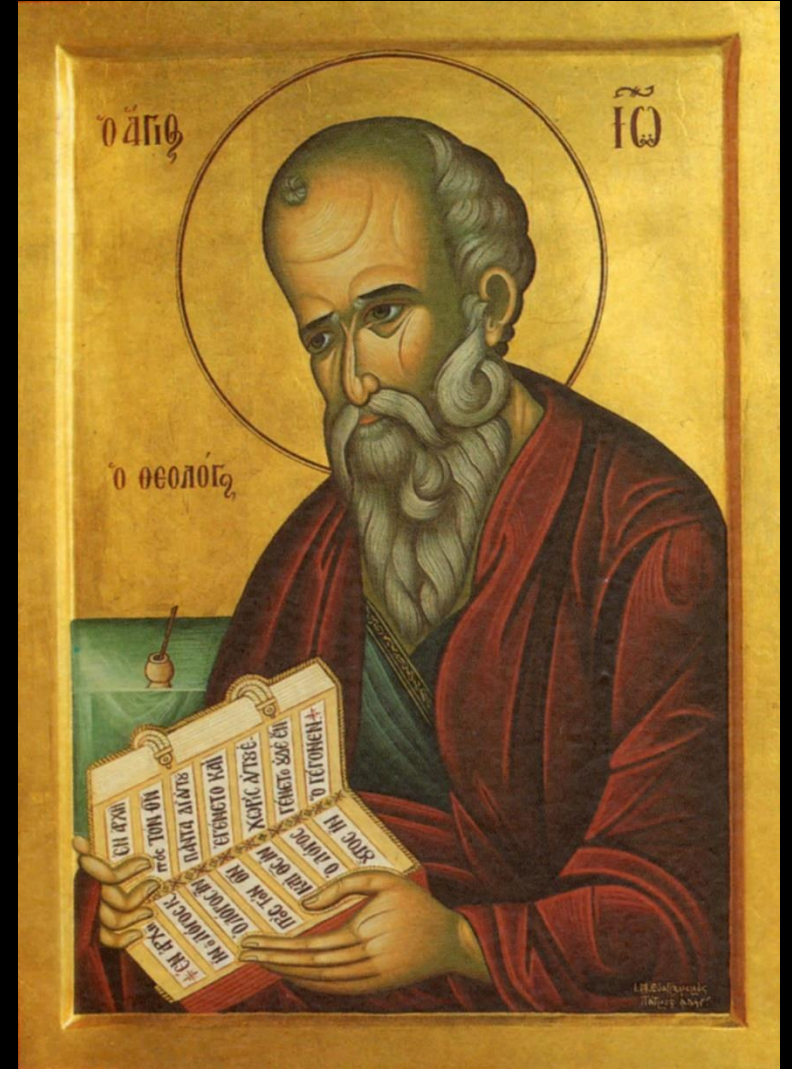


Loving in Truth

2 John



St. John the Theologian and Evangelist, Byzantine Icon

Loving in Truth Introduction

Loving in Truth Introduction

- **Author:** John the Apostle
- **Date:** 90 AD (more or less)
- **Location:** Ephesus
- **Recipients:** A specific local church in the region around Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia.
- **Circumstances:** John ran across people from this church during a time of division over false teachings.
- **Purpose:** Personal encouragement in the faith.

Loving in Truth Introduction

- Ephesians 4:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth [one word, as in “truthing”] in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

Loving in Truth Introduction

Soundbite:

Truth without love is brutal; it can be
simply callous or cruel.

Love without truth is deceptive; it nurtures
a worldview of sentimental fantasy.

2 John

- This letter has the fewest verses of any book in the Bible – though 3 John has fewer words.
- Let's stand and read it through together.

2 John 1-2

2 John 1-2

- John refers to himself simply as “the elder.”
- In Acts 11:30, apostles are called “elders.”
- In 1 Peter 5:1, Peter, speaking to elders, calls himself a “fellow elder.”

2 John 1-2

- John addresses a local church as “the elect lady and her children.”
- Churches are spoken of as women, perhaps in part because the Greek word for church is feminine.
- 1 Peter 5:13 “She who is in Babylon ...”
- Christ is the husband or bridegroom, so the church is feminine – and compared to his bride.

2 John 1-2

- John truly loves them, but with a love that is connected to the truth.
- This truth is abiding and eternal – it “will be with us forever.”

2 John 1-2

- In John 14:17, 15:26 and 16:13, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of truth.”
- In 1 John 5:6, John says plainly, “the Spirit is the truth.”
- The Holy Spirit produces God’s divine love within us and binds us together in the truth of the gospel.

2 John 3

2 John 3

- **Grace, mercy and peace** These are the undeserved blessings that come to us by means of the gospel.
- John makes it a point to place **God the Father and Jesus Christ the Father's Son** on the same level.
- He is making a statement regarding a controversy that was brewing in this region at the time.

2 John 3

- In truth and love And again, John is intentional about keeping truth and love together.

- 1 John 3:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him.

2 John 4

2 John 4

- I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth ...
- John ran across some of this church's members and commends them for their faithfulness to the truth.
- 3 John 4 (ESV)

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

2 John 5

2 John 5

- love one another In 1 John, the apostle repeated this phrase 5 times. Now he repeats it again.
- 1 John 3:11
- 1 John 3:23
- 1 John 4:7
- 1 John 4:11
- 1 John 4:12

2 John 5

- love one another In 1 John, the apostle repeated this phrase 5 times. Now he repeats it again.

- 1 John 3:11

For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

2 John 5

- love one another In 1 John, the apostle repeated this phrase 5 times. Now he repeats it again.

- 1 John 3:23

And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

2 John 5

- love one another In 1 John, the apostle repeated this phrase 5 times. Now he repeats it again.

- 1 John 4:7

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

2 John 5

- love one another In 1 John, the apostle repeated this phrase 5 times. Now he repeats it again.

- 1 John 4:11

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

2 John 5

- love one another In 1 John, the apostle repeated this phrase 5 times. Now he repeats it again.

- 1 John 4:12

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

2 John 6

2 John 6

- And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments
- We might add obedience to truth and love.
- John is determined to keep these various concepts together.
- Remember what we saw last week in 1 John 5?

Key Areas in 1 John 5

1. Correct Doctrine about Jesus Christ
2. Love of God
3. Love of Others
4. Obedience to God's Commandments
5. The Holy Spirit
6. Prayer for Self
7. Prayer for Others

2 John 6

- 1 John 5:2-3

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

2 John 7

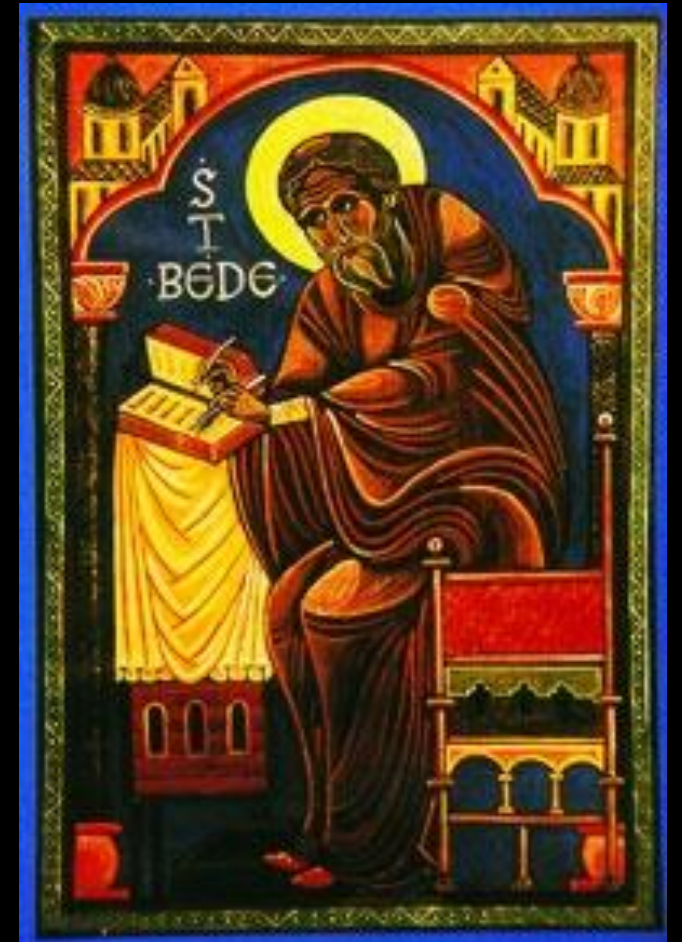
2 John 7

- As in **1 John**, he emphasizes the importance of correct doctrine about Jesus Christ.
- This was a big area of contention in the region around Ephesus at that time.
- It is also the kind of error that can lead to many others.

2 John 7

This verse might apply to a wide range of heretics ... Perhaps they rejected the idea that his flesh was real or that his soul was as ours. Or ... refused to accept that he was divine, or that his Father was really God or that the Holy Spirit was really Almighty God ...

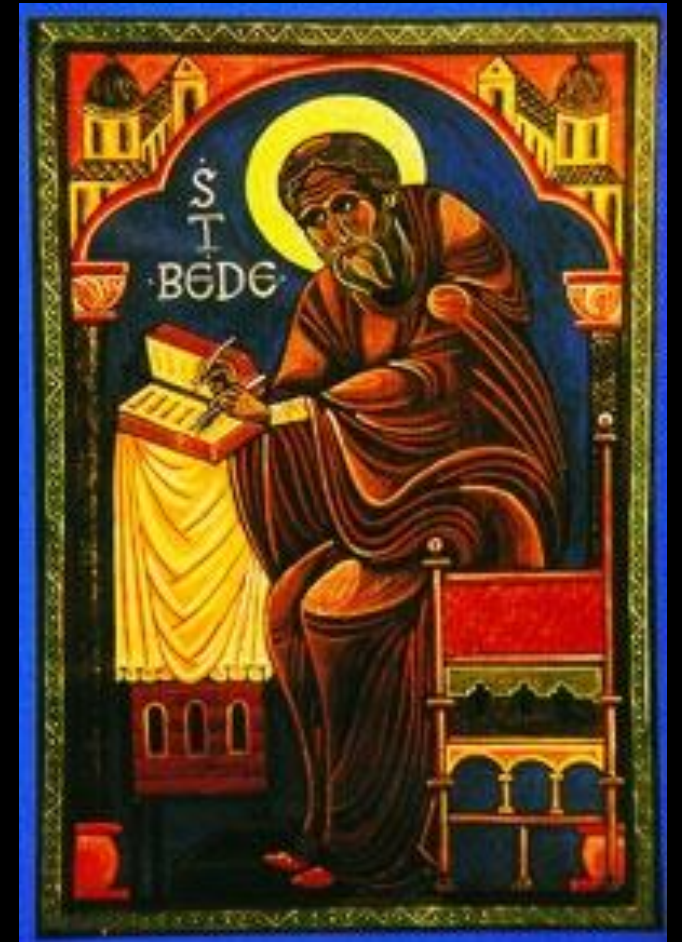
– Bede (672 – 735), English monk



2 John 7

John may even be referring to those Jews who, rejecting any link between Jesus and God, deny that Christ has come in the flesh but are waiting for antichrist, to their own damnation.

– Bede (672 – 735), English monk



2 John 7

- There is also a firm link between the first coming of Christ to the earth and his second coming.
- Many fail to receive what the Bible teaches about the first coming of Jesus.
- For them, there is no way to grasp the truth of the second coming.

2 John 8

2 John 8

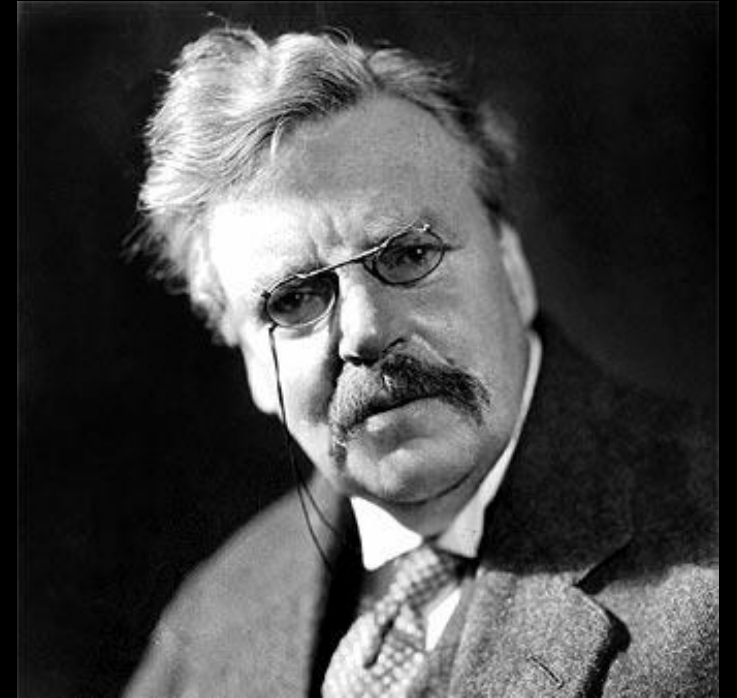
- John is concerned that his efforts and those of the other apostles will be in vain.
- If church members do not stick with the basic truths of the faith, then everyone loses.
- In a cultural context such as ours, sticking with the truth is getting harder all the time.

2 John 8

*What we suffer from today is
humility in the wrong place ...*

*A man was meant to be doubtful
about himself, but undoubting about
the truth; this has been exactly
reversed ...*

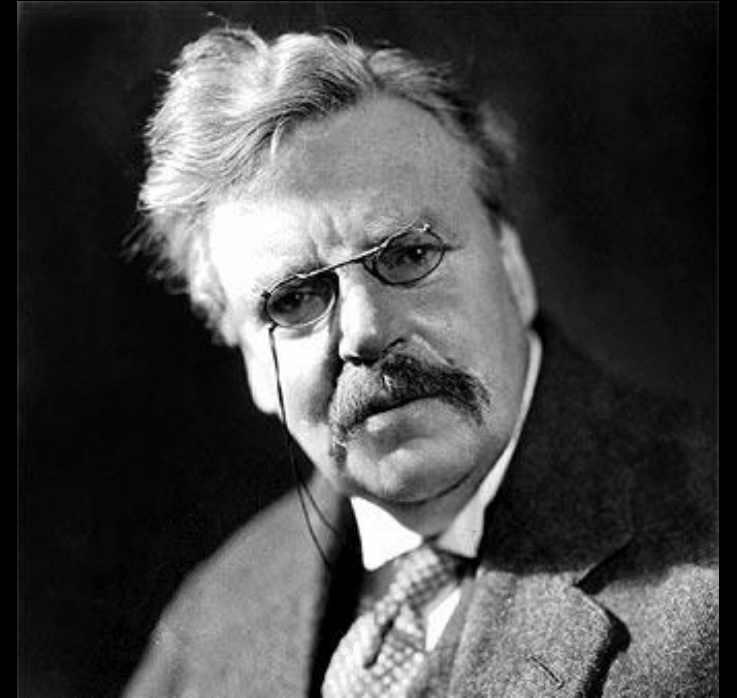
*– G. K. Chesterton (1874 – 1936),
English author, lay theologian,
social critic*



2 John 8

We are on the road to producing a race of men too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table ... Scoffers of old time were too proud to be convinced; but these are too humble to be convinced ...

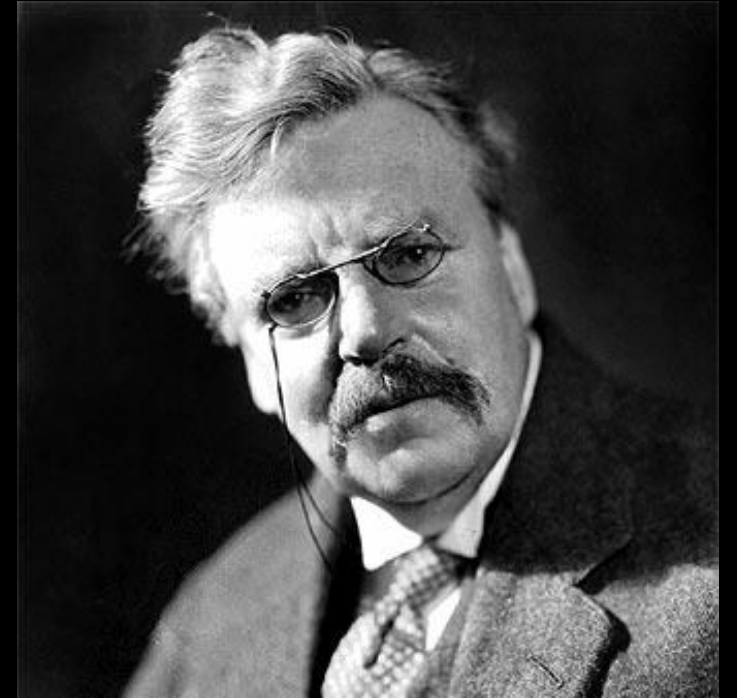
– G. K. Chesterton (1874 – 1936),
English author, lay theologian,
social critic



2 John 8

*The meek do inherit the earth; but
the modern sceptics are too meek
even to claim their inheritance.*

– G. K. Chesterton (1874 – 1936),
English author, lay theologian,
social critic



2 John 8

- In other words, many today believe that it is humility to say that they don't know what they believe.
- It then becomes arrogance – a mere assertion of power – to be confident that truth is truth.
- Do you think the enemy might find that to be a useful strategy?
- How can the truth ever set anyone free?

2 John 8

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2 John 9

2 John 9

- A group of French researchers studied young people who converted to Islam.
- They published their findings in the *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*.
- The converts pointed to the requirements of regular prayer, observing food taboos and the Ramadan fast.

2 John 9

- In other words, many converts believed becoming a Muslim would make them **more disciplined**.
- They found that useful and attractive.
- This is a far cry from John's concern for truth.

2 John 9

- No doubt the heretics of John's time saw themselves as advanced thinkers.
- Error can present itself as a “new truth” or a “different way of looking at” Jesus or the Bible.
- Their point is that there is something vital that traditional thinkers have all wrong.
- And they discourage people from abiding in the teaching of Christ.

2 John 9

If you are unfaithful and allow yourself to be tricked regarding the truth, you can lose what God has in store and not receive your full reward (v. 8). What prevents this? Intimacy with God ...

*– Tony Evans, pastor and
Bible Teacher*



2 John 9

You must remain in Christ's teaching (v. 9). You can't be close to Christ without being close to his teaching. Intimacy with God requires remaining or abiding in his Word.

*– Tony Evans, pastor and
Bible Teacher*



2 John 9

- Too often those who believe they are being innovative are running ahead of God himself.
- In so doing, they lose their connection with both the Father and the Son.
- Our understanding of the Scriptures cannot change.
- We only adapt the same old truth and teaching to new contexts.

2 John 10-11

2 John 10-11

- Christians are supposed to show hospitality, so we might think this conflicts with other Scripture.
- Keep in mind that this is a letter to a church at a time when travelling teachers were common guests.
- Such hospitality was more official, not private, and would include sharing the pulpit as well as a meal.

2 John 10-11

- Today such teachers may not show up at our door.
- Rather, their teaching is widely available through books, online videos, and podcasts.
- We need to be extra discerning.
- Step #1 is to stay in the Word!

2 John 12-13

2 John 12-13

- I personally love visiting missionaries on the field or having visiting missionaries in our home.
- A picture may be worth a thousand words, but a visit is worth a thousand pictures.
- We may receive the identical information, but we experience that information so much more fully.

2 John 12-13

- Here John says that he plans to come for a visit.
- This gives both him and the church something to look forward to in the near future.
- The **elect sister** would be John's local church.

Loving in Truth

Conclusions

Loving in Truth Conclusions

- John is the apostle and author of Scripture who reminds us the most of our need to **love one another**.
- He is equally committed to **the truth**.
- To truly love as God does, we need a right understanding of God to begin with.

Loving in Truth Conclusions

- Truth and love. Love and truth.
- For that matter, truth, love, and obedience to God's commandments.
- Let's please strive to be a church that never separates what God has joined together.

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