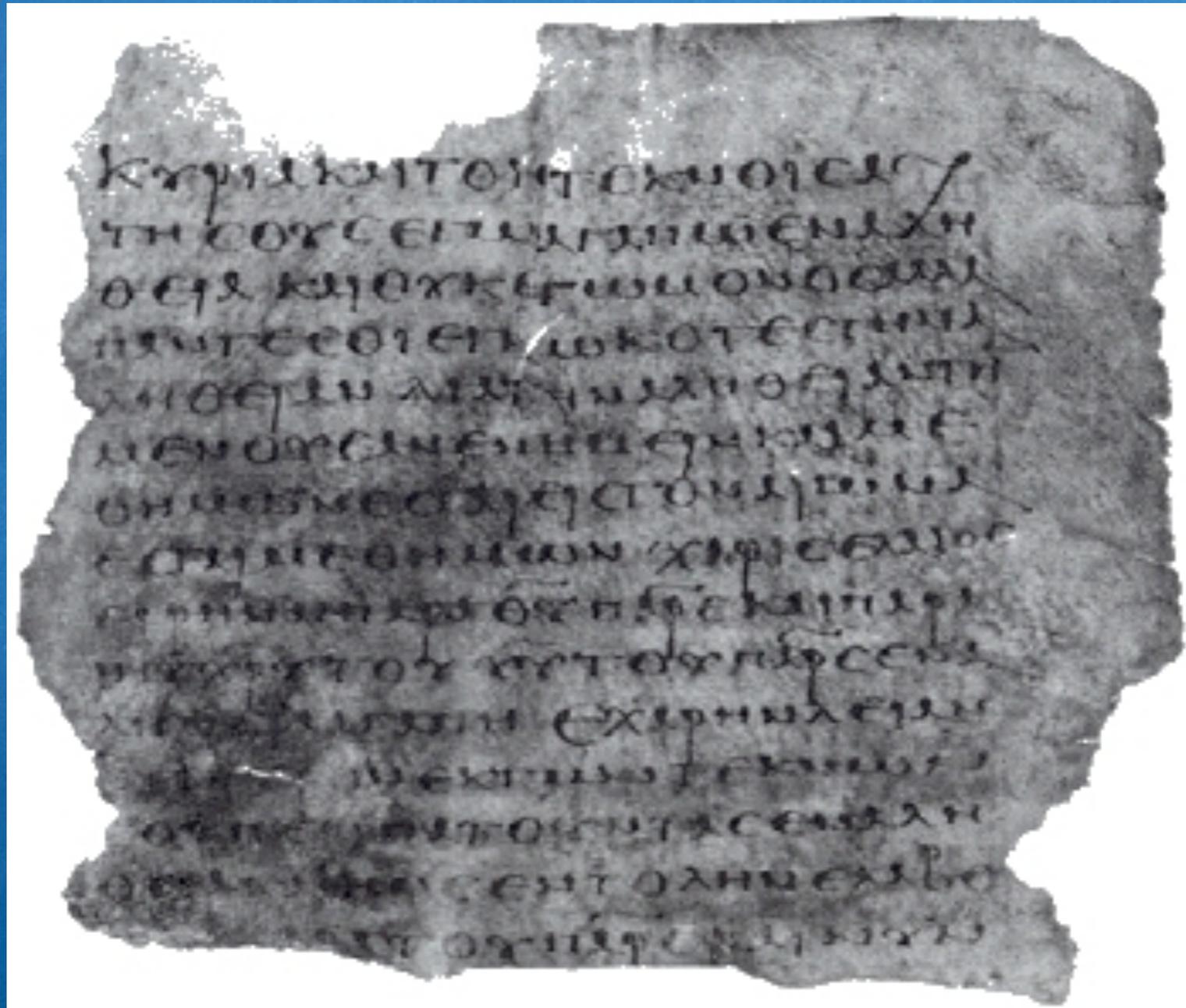


The Epistles of John

Week 2 - 2 John 1-3

Actual Manuscript of 2 John 1-5



The epistles of John are something of an enigma when considered together. Few books of the New Testament are more loved, memorized, or quoted than 1 John. On the other hand one is hard pressed to find any books of Scripture more ignored and taught less than 2 and 3 John.

Ben Witherington III

2 John

The neglect of this epistle throughout the history of the church has been unfortunate because no letter more beautifully balances the twin Christian graces of “love” and “truth.” ***John knew that both love and truth are essential and not optional***

John’s concern is certainly corporate, but it is also relational and individual. John loves this community personally and devotedly.

2 John

John also builds this epistle around unifying key words. In these thirteen verses John repeatedly uses:

- “truth” (five times)
- “love” (four times)
- “commandment” (four times)
- “walk” (three times)
- “teaching” (three times)
- “children” (three times)

He also utilizes a rare word, “antichrist,” which appears in Scripture only in 1 and 2 John (see 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

2 John

An ancient epistle began with a salutation or word of introduction that followed a threefold formula of:

- (1) the name of the sender
- (2) the name of the recipient
- (3) a word of greeting

The salutation was by no means merely perfunctory or insignificant. It would often establish the mood of the epistle and contain in “seed form” major themes or concerns the author wished to address.

2 John 1-3

2 John 1–3 (ESV)

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, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.

2 John 1-3

This epistle is anonymous with the author providing as simple and direct an identification as is found in the New Testament (this also is true of 3 John).

This introduction of the author as “the elder” is unique to 2 and 3 John. “The elder” emphasizes his position and personal relationship with the recipients of the letter. This is more important than his name.

No doubt those receiving this letter were quite familiar with the author, and his title conveys the respect and authority he held with the “chosen lady and her children.”

The fact that the apostle John was by now an old man and that he also held a special position and authority as the last surviving apostle makes this title especially fitting. He had no need to assert his apostleship. That was common knowledge and he could appeal to them in a more tender fashion.

Who are the chosen lady and her children?

“Chosen Lady” is a term of endearment and respect. Lady (kuria) is the feminine form of “lord.” This may be a hint in the address of the church as the bride of Christ.

The majority of scholars, especially recent ones, have favored believing the phrase to be a metaphorical or symbolic means of identifying a local church and its members.

2 John 1-3

Grace, mercy, and peace

You have the common Greek greeting in grace (χάρις, charis).

The common Hebrew greeting in peace (εἰρήνη, eirênê—the Greek form of shalom).

Mercy (ἔλεος, eleos) serves as the bridge connecting the two.

Grace, mercy, and peace flourish in an environment where truth and love prevail.

John points out that these Christian graces come from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son. The repetition of the preposition "from" is important. It places the Father and Son on an equal standing and also distinguishes their separate personhood.

Justice -> Mercy -> Grace



Homework

John McArthur has said that he reads each book of the Bible 30 times before he begins to study it in preparation for teaching it. I'd like us to all read 2 John just one time per day this coming week to prepare for next week.

Read one translation of 2 John each day this week. It takes less than 2 minutes. Go slowly and think about what is being said.

Write down any questions or things you'd like to discuss in class next week on the first page or email them to me.

Thank you for coming!

See you next week