

"**Elder**," in its basic use, simply means an older or aged man. Within the context of the faith community, it means one who possesses spiritual authority and leadership by virtue of his character.

"**Elect lady and her children**" - The majority of scholars hold to this as symbolic language referring a local church. **Verse 13** would give reference to another church.

1. Know and pursue God's love and truth.
2. Desire God's love and truth for others.
3. Recognize love and truth and reject lies and errors.

If "**love**" were only a religious emotion or a good feeling about another person, it could not be commanded. The reason love is a commandment is that it is much more than affection; it is an act of the will regardless of feelings. Love is to want God's best for another person in spite of what our feelings may dictate. I cannot always will my emotions, but I can "will" my actions, and do good to others even if I don't feel like it. I can obey commands even when my affections are weak or absent.

The Garden of Gethsemane prayer confirms that love and obedience are completely separate at times from feelings and affections. There weren't any good feelings regarding the cross that Jesus Christ would suffer. It was 100% love and obedience to His Father's will.

Our fallen human nature has a bent to embrace lies about God's truth, and this can only be cured through **the gospel of Jesus Christ!**

John writes that truth is absolute, but **truth is also personal and eternal!**

Grace is God giving us what we did not deserve (un-merited favor of God).

Mercy is God *not* giving us what we did deserve.

Peace is the satisfaction of heart, mind, and soul in knowing God loves us in Christ.

Grace – Opposite is Works

Mercy – Opposite is Justice

Peace – Opposite is Wrath

John 3:36 *He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

The Christian faith stands or falls on the doctrine of the **deity of Jesus Christ**. If He is only a man, then He cannot save us, no matter how gifted or unique He might be.

Embracing truth equates rejecting error.

John told them the commandment to love via obedience is "**from the beginning**." The "from the beginning" line was designed to warn against any "reinterpretation" of God's will, such as the antichrists might propose. The false teachers wanted to make God's commandments appear harsh and unpleasant so they could offer a form of freedom that in reality was bondage.

Satan does not have to get someone to deny Christ, reject Scripture, or become an atheist. Satan is more than glad to keep people within the context of Christianity as long as they will embrace a form of it that is not Biblical.

Galatians 1:6-9 *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

Where did these false teachers come from originally? "For many deceivers have gone out into the world". They went out *from the church!* At one time, they professed to believe "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (**Jude 3**), but they turned from that faith and abandoned the truth and the church. "They went out from us, but they were not of us" (**1 John 2:19**). "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (**Acts 20:30**).

The Elder, To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, ² because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: ³ Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. ⁴ I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. ⁵ And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. ⁶ This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it. ⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁸ Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. ⁹ Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. ¹² Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. ¹³ The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

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