

The Letter to the Elect Lady

“The elder unto **the elect lady and her children**, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth” (2Jo 1:1). What was so special about this lady that one of the 66 books of the Scriptures was penned just to her? What was it about her that the apostle John himself and everyone else that knew the truth loved her so much? And why is she called the elect or chosen lady? It’s because her husband is the one that had been chosen by God to help Christ carry His cross: “And as they came out, they found **a man of Cyrene, Simon** by name: him they compelled to bear his cross” (Mat 27:32), “And they compel one **Simon a Cyrenian**, who passed by, coming out of the country, **the father of Alexander and Rufus**, to bear his cross” (Mar 15:21), “And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one **Simon, a Cyrenian**, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus” (Luk 23:26).

That she was “elect” has nothing to do with the false doctrine of Calvinism. It’s simply that she assumed the honor of that title from her deceased husband chosen to carry Christ’s cross. And that distinguished recognition also extended to the rest of the family. Simon of Cyrene was “the father of Alexander and Rufus” (Mar 15:21), of whom Paul wrote, “Salute **Rufus chosen** in the Lord” (Rom 16:13). And not only his sons but even his extended family bore that honor, “The children of thy **elect sister**” (2Jo 1:13).

John was there at the crucifixion and had personally witnessed Simon carrying Christ’s cross. He saw this woman’s husband compelled to perform the lowly and demeaning task of helping, what appeared to be just another ordinary convicted criminal, carry his cross to his execution. And as Christ gave John the responsibility of caring for His own mother, John also assumed somewhat of an oversight of Simon’s widow as well, writing to her and visiting her, “Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full” (2Jo 1:12). She was such an endeared lady that all of the apostles considered her like a mother, “Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and **his mother and mine**” (Rom 16:13).

John’s overriding concern for this lady and her family was for them to be living by the truth, “I rejoiced greatly that I found of **thy children walking in truth**, as we

have received a commandment from the Father” (2Jo 1:4). Even while the apostles were still alive, there were “many deceivers” teaching a different Christ, “For **many deceivers** are entered into the world, who **confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh**. This is a deceiver and **an antichrist**.” (2Jo 1:7). Antichrists at that time were teaching that Christ hadn’t come in the flesh yet her own husband had been drenched with Christ’s blood from His flesh!

Simon of Cyrene was from North Africa. He was dark-skinned and likely discriminated against. But the preaching of the cross includes the fact that God chose a dark-skinned Gentile to help Christ carry His cross, “But **God hath chosen** the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and **God hath chosen** the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, **hath God chosen**, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are” (1Co 1:27-28). Though the soldiers likely spotted this man in the crowd and chose him because of his skin color to perform what nobody else wanted to do, it was actually God who chose him to perform this most honorable deed that could ever be done.

The preaching of the cross includes several narratives considered unwise by the “wise” of the world: our Savior was from the despised city of Nazareth; He was a poor, homeless, and convicted criminal; a dark-skinned man helped Him carry His cross; women were the first eye-witnesses of His resurrection. All of these things were in God’s plan so “That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1Co 1:29). To be saved by the Savior, one must humbly embrace and glory in these things.

Also, in this short letter to this dear lady, John wrote one of the most powerful and profound statements in all of Scripture, “Whosoever **transgresseth**, and abideth not in **the doctrine of Christ, hath not God**. He that abideth in **the doctrine of Christ**, he hath both the Father and the Son.” (2Jo 1:9). The doctrine of Christ is that the Father is God and Jesus is His Son, “**God the Father**, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, **the Son of the Father**” (2Jo 1:3). Whether or not we belong to God the Father depends upon where we are with the teachings of His Son Jesus Christ. We can’t knowingly be in disagreement with the Son and still be right with the Father. To abide in what He taught is to be unashamed before people of what He taught. It’s to be in agreement, obedience, and submission to Him and His teaching, “He that **abideth in the doctrine of Christ**, he hath both the Father and the Son.”