

2 John 1:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

Analysis

The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen. John concludes with greetings from "the children of thy elect sister" (Greek *ta tekna tēs adelphēs sou tēs eklektēs, τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου τῆς ἐκλεκτῆς*). This likely refers to members of the church from which John writes, sending greetings to the church he addresses. The consistent metaphor (elect lady and elect sister, with their children) suggests both are congregations rather than individuals, though the language could apply to actual relatives.

The adjective "elect" (Greek *eklektēs, ἐκλεκτῆς*) echoes verse 1, emphasizing God's sovereign choice in salvation. Both congregations share this identity: chosen by God, not self-selected or merely organized by human will. This divine election creates kinship—they are sisters in the family of God. The metaphor of "children" emphasizes the familial nature of the church, bound together not by institutional structure or social affinity but by common identity as God's elect people.

"Amen" (Greek *amēn, ἀμήν*) is transliterated from Hebrew, meaning "truly" or "so be it." It affirms the truthfulness and importance of what preceded. Some manuscripts omit it, but its presence is fitting—John has spoken vital truths about love, truth, discernment, and doctrine that deserve solemn affirmation. The greeting creates connection between separated Christian communities, reminding them they are not isolated but part of a worldwide family united by shared faith in Christ and commitment to apostolic truth.

Historical Context

Early Christian letters typically concluded with greetings, often conveying regards from one community to another or from specific individuals to recipients (Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16:19-20, Colossians 4:10-15, Philippians 4:21-22). These greetings reinforced the interconnectedness of churches throughout the Roman world. Despite geographic separation and difficult travel, Christians maintained awareness of and concern for believers in distant locations.

The concept of churches as sister congregations reflects both Jewish synagogue practice and the early Christian understanding of universal church unity. Local assemblies were not independent franchises but members of one body, sharing common faith, doctrine, and mission. This unity transcended ethnic, social, and geographic boundaries—remarkable in the ancient world where religion typically reinforced local or ethnic identity.

Referring to congregations as "elect" emphasized that church identity derived from God's sovereign grace, not human choice or worthiness. This theological understanding fostered humility (we didn't choose God; He chose us) and assurance (our standing depends on God's unchanging purpose, not our fluctuating faithfulness). The early church's confidence in divine election enabled them to maintain identity under persecution and resist compromise with pagan culture. They knew who they were—God's chosen people—regardless of external circumstances or societal regard.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How can local churches cultivate greater awareness of and connection with the global body of Christ?
2. What practical differences does believing in God's sovereign election make for Christian assurance, humility, and perseverance?
3. How should viewing the church as family rather than merely an organization shape our expectations and practices of Christian community?

Interlinear Text

Ἄσπάζεται σε τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου τῆς
greet thee G3588 The children G3588 sister G79 of thy G3588
G782 G4571 G5043 G679 G4675

ἐκλεκτῆς ἀμήν
elect Amen
G1588 G281

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:13 (Parallel theme): The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org