

2 John

AUTHOR: John

TIME WRITTEN: Probably about A.D. 90 from Ephesus

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 63rd Book in the Bible
- 24th book in the New Testament
- 19th of 21 epistle books
- 62 have preceded it. 3 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 1

VERSES: 13

WORDS: 303

KEY WORD: Avoid Fellowship With False Teachers

KEY PASSAGE:

2 John 9-10 - “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.

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him.”

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 2 JOHN

1. As strange as it may seem, a good place to begin a study of 2 John is **1 Corinthians 10:12** - “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”
 - a. These words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:12 could well stand as a subtitle for John’s little epistle.
 - b. The recipients, a lady and her children, were obviously standing in and walking in the truth, remaining faithful to the commandments they had received from the Father.
 - c. John is deeply pleased to be able to commend them.
 - d. But he takes nothing for granted.
 - e. Realizing that standing is just one step removed from falling, he hesitates not at all to issue a reminder: love one another.
 - f. John admits that this is not a new revelation, but he views it sufficiently important to repent.
 - g. Loving one another, he stresses, is equivalent to walking according to God’s commandments.
2. John indicates, however, that this love must be discerning.
 - a. It is not a naive, unthinking, open to anything and anyone kind of love.
 - b. Biblical love is a matter of choice; it is dangerous and foolish to float through life with undiscerning love.

- c. False teachers abound who do not acknowledge Christ as having come in the flesh.
- d. It is false charity to open the door to false teaching.
 - 1. We must have fellowship with God.
 - 2. We must have fellowship with fellow Christians.
 - 3. But we must not have fellowship with false teachers.
- 3. The identification of the original readers of this epistle is difficult because of disagreement regarding the interpretation of “the elect lady and her children’ in verse 1.
 - a. Some scholars believe that the address should be taken literally to refer to a specific woman and her children.
 - b. Others prefer to take it as a figurative description of a local church.
- 4. The evidence is insufficient for a decisive conclusion, but in either case, the readers were well known to John and probably lived in the province of Asia, not far from Ephesus.
- 5. If the figurative view is taken, “the children of your elect sister” (**v. 13**) refers to the members of a sister church.
- 6. In his first epistle, John wrote that a number of false teachers had split away from the church.
 - a. “They went out from us, but they were not of us.” **1 John 2:19**
 - b. Some of these became traveling teachers who depended on the hospitality of individuals while they sought to infiltrate churches with their teachings.
- 7. Judging from the content of 2 John, it was evidently contemporaneous with 1 John or was written slightly later.
- 8. All three of John’s epistles may have been written in Ephesus.

SUMMARY OF 2 JOHN

INTRODUCTION:

- A. This brief letter has much in common with 1 John, including a warning about the danger of false teachers who deny the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
- B. There are two major sections in the book:
 - 1. Abide in God’s Commandments. (verses 1-6)
 - 2. Abide Not with False Teachers. (verses 7-13)

ABIDE IN GOD’S COMMANDMENTS. (verses 1-6)

- A. The salutation (verses. 1-3) centers on the concept of abiding in the truth (mentioned four times in these three verses).
 - 1. The recipients are loved for their adherence to the truth by “all those who have known the truth.”

2. The apostle commends his readers on their walk in truth in obedience to God's commandment. (verse 4), and he reminds them that this commandment entails the practice of love for one another. verses 5-6
3. The divine command is given in verse 5 and the human response follows in verse 6.

ABIDE NOT WITH FALSE TEACHERS. (verses 7-13)

- A. Moving from the basic test of Christian behavior (love for the brethren) to the basic test of Christian belief (the Person of Christ), John admonishes the readers to beware of deceivers "who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. verses 7-9
 1. In no uncertain terms, the apostle enjoins the readers to deny even the slightest assistance or encouragement to itinerant teachers who promote an erroneous view of Christ (and hence of salvation. verses 10-11).
- B. This letter closes with John's explanation of its brevity: he anticipates a future visit during
which he will be able to "speak face to face" with his readers. v. 12
- C. The meaning of the greeting in verse 13 relates to the interpretation of verse 1.