

2 John

Introduction

- Probably written shortly after *1 John* – 90’s A.D.
- It does not mention John’s name (a characteristic of the apostle John)
- This is the shortest in length of all books in the Bible
- There are no real problems in understanding this letter (not as complicated as *1 John*)
- Main question: Who was the chosen lady?** (King James Version: the elect lady)
- What are the possibilities for the lady?**
 1. The “lady” could have been a congregation someplace
 - Is the church ever referred to as being female?** Yes, *Ephesians 5 – the bride of Christ*
 - Two problems:
 1. **If the church is the lady, who are the children of the lady in v 1 and v 3?**
 2. John is not using symbolic language here (if this were *Revelation*, maybe a church)
 - General rule of Bible interpretation (hermeneutics): Unless there is good reason to do otherwise, we take the most obvious meaning of the passage as the correct meaning
 - In other words, there is no good reason to take “lady” as symbolic for a church
 2. The “lady” was a real lady
 - Problems: **Why didn’t John use her name?**
 - Any ideas?** Maybe because of persecution he didn’t want to take chance on her being identified
 - Why had she written John?** She had a question she wanted to ask John about
 - It seems most reasonable to understand that this was a real lady who had written John for advice about a question that was troubling her
 - Why is there no mention of her husband?** Maybe dead, maybe not a Christian (we have many fine Christian women today in this situation)
 - Theme of letter:** Do not tolerate false teaching in the name of love – love is based on truth

2 John 1-3

- V1** – Beautiful opening! – The aged apostle of love, the “elder”
 - Was John literally an elder?** Yes (Peter also – *1 Peter 5*)
 - What can we guess about her children?** Some were Christians (v 4)
 - John loved her
 - In what sense did he love her?** Christian love (no indication they had ever met)
 - How did John know about her?** *V 13* – her nieces and nephews might have been members where John was an elder
 - What was the restriction on John’s love for her?** Love in truth
 - Some believe that love means ignoring doctrinal problems and pretending that there is peace, when there isn’t
 - All who love the truth would love this chosen lady

V2 – **Why was John writing this letter?** For the sake of the truth

- How long will we have the truth?** Forever

- V 3**– A fairly common form of greeting in a letter – *grace* for Greek-speaking Christians
 -*Peace* (shalom) for Hebrew Christians
 -A standard type greeting in letters of New Testament
 -**How is Jesus identified?** Son of the Father (not the son of Joseph)
 -Notice: truth and love

2 John 4-8

- V 4**– **What had made John glad?** He found some of her children walking in the truth
 -**The rest of her children?** Maybe John didn't know them (they were living elsewhere), or maybe some of them were unfaithful
 -**Explain: walking in truth?** Living faithful lives
Read *Gospel Advocate NT Commentary (Peter, John, Jude, p. 342* - beautiful comments by Guy N. Woods
 -An ordinary woman in eyes of world, but a precious sister in the eyes of the apostle John
 -Today, we send and receive letters of encouragement from fellow Christians
 -It is always nice to get an encouraging letter (whether an elder, deacon, Bible class teacher, or preacher, etc.)

- V 5**– **What kind of commandment was John going to give this lady?** Not a new one, but one they had had from the beginning
 -**What was the commandment?** That Christians are to love one another (*John 13.34-35*)
 -Notice “we” here – in other words, John had an obligation to obey it also (apostles were not exempt)

- V 6**– What a verse!
 -The Bible definition of love: **What is love?** To walk according to the commandments of God
 -People get emotional about Christianity and like candlelight services, swaying to music, holding hands in the air, etc.
 -John: Love is obeying God
 -So the theme of *2 John* is: Don't tolerate false doctrine in the name of love!

- V 7**– A dear, sweet Christian lady, and John had to warn her – this should be a sober warning for us
 -We never get so well-grounded that we can forget about false teachers - **Read 1 John 4.1**
 -**What does John say about false teachers here?** Many have gone out into the world
 -**Who were false teachers of John's day?** Those who said “Jesus Christ” did not come in the flesh (Gnostics)
 -**Who is the anti-Christ?** Same people
 -This is the last mention of anti-Christ in Scriptures (only four verses total)
 -Considering how the evangelical churches have built huge doctrines and beliefs on the "Anti-Christ," you would think that there must be hundreds of Scriptures on this subject!

- V 8**– **Why plural “yourselves”?** Lady and her children
 -**Why did John warn them to watch themselves?** Because they could lose what they had accomplished
 -“We” – what the apostles had presented the gospel

- Read Galatians 5.4 (fallen from grace)
- 2 Peter 3.17 – falling from steadfastness
- Also v 8 = degrees of punishment and reward

2 John 9-11

V 9 – A general principal

- In what two directions can false teachers go?** Go beyond Scriptures or not teach all that is found in the Scriptures (too liberal or too conservative)
- If we are walking on narrow mountain path, we can fall off either side
- In which direction were the Gnostics going?** Too “liberal” – the liberals of their day
- What two factions existed in days of Jesus?** Pharisees and Sadducees (conservative and liberal)
- The Gnostics were in this latter category
- Message of John to this lady in v 9?** Make sure that any teacher who comes your way abides in sound doctrine

V 10 – Apparently this Christian lady was known for her hospitality toward visiting preachers in the first century (no motels with room service)

- So traveling preachers and Christians stayed with members of the church
- This Christian lady had probably written John, asking him if she should “house” the traveling preachers who were Gnostics
- Maybe she had a large house and had plenty of room for guests
- V 10* is the key verse
- Should she let the Gnostic teachers in her house?** No! Absolutely not!
- Not only was she not to let them stay there, what else was she not to do?** Not to give them a greeting (for example: Godspeed, God bless you, etc.)
- She was to show **no** hospitality to those who brought false doctrine
- **Read 1 Corinthians 5.11** - Not to eat with disfellowshipped person
- What implications do these verses have for us today?** Not to ‘socialize’ with false teachers or those who have been disfellowshipped
- We are not to invite into our houses Mormon "elders," Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.
- When one congregation withdraws fellowship from someone, other congregations are to honor that
- We are to admonish such a person as a brother - See *2 Thessalonian 3.14-15*

V 11 – **Why not associate with such a person?** We participate in his evil deeds by doing so

- John: We must not do anything that supports false teaching
- We are still to show hospitality to strangers
- But if we socialize or associate with false teachers, then we are guilty of what they are doing!

2 John 12-13

V 12 – **Did John have any more to say?** Yes

- But?** Not on paper – he would visit her in person

V13 – Meaning? Probably her nieces and nephews were members of the church where John preached

Great lessons from chapter 2 John:

-**Application?** Mormons and Jehovah Witness who come to door

-Mormons make one convert for every eight houses that they get into

For us as Christians, there is to be no refreshment for them, no warm greeting, no “Godspeed”

-**Questions to consider:**

1. How can there be unity among religious groups today?
2. Where did Jesus Christ preach for unity? *John 17.20-23*
3. What is the basis for that unity?

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