

2 John

I. **Author:** The apostle John

- A. He is not mentioned by name, but his name is mentioned in the book of Revelation. (Rev. 1:4, 9).
- B. The style of 2 John is the same as the gospel and other epistles known as Johannine writings.
 - 1. The style is a little different from the book of Revelation which is also part of the Johannine writings.
 - 2. The style difference may be because of age, subject matter, type of writing, etc.
 - 3. The circumstances of 2 John are quite different from those facing the readers of the book of Revelation.
- C. Early writers ascribe it to him.
- D. He calls himself “the elder”. Gr. “presbu’teros”
 - 1. He may have been an apostle and elder as Peter was. (1 Pet. 1:1; 5:1,2).
 - 2. It might denote one advanced in years. (Acts 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:1, 18).
 - a. The words in 1 John may denote advanced years.
 - b. The words could also denote affection for his readers. See John 13:33 & notes in 1 John.
 - 3. It might denote one who was an early or ancient witness of Christ.

II. **To whom written:** “Chosen lady and her children” (eklekte kuria).

- A. Some believe “chosen lady” refers to the church.
 - 1. It is argued that the “elect lady” is a personification for a local church to whom John is writing.
 - a. “Personify” is to “conceive of or represent as a person.”
 - b. It is giving personal attributes to an inanimate object or abstract idea. Ex. the floods clap their hands.
 - 2. The church is the bride of Christ. (2 Cor. 11:2). See Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 22:17; 21:9.
 - a. According to this view verse 13 refers to a similar church in the neighborhood and her children are likewise its members.
 - b. The reason for not using its geographical local name may have been merely one of style or to keep the identity of the church secret in case the letter fell into the hands of government officials.
- B. The word “lady” comes from the Greek “kuria.” (Cyria)

1. Some think it was a personal name.
2. The name “Cyria” was sometimes a personal name. The name means “lady.”
3. The epistle seems to be addressed to a Christian lady.
4. The language of v. 5 and v. 13 more naturally refers to individual than a church.
5. The fact women are never called by the term “lady” in the New Testament may favor “kuria” being used as proper name.
6. The idea of the “church” having children is foreign to the New Testament.
7. The church is made up of individuals who through the gospel obey Christ.

C. Others regard “eklekte” as proper name. (lady eklekte)

1. This word is not normally used as proper name. There is some documentation for it.
2. It [eklekte] is used as adjective in verse 13. “chosen sister”
3. It is not likely two sisters would have the same name nor is it likely John would use the adjective to describe one whose sister was named “eklekte”.

D. Some think both words are meant to be descriptive, “to the elect lady.”

1. The person is not further identified.
2. This seems very likely.

III. Purpose of Book: It is to warn against false teachers who were corrupting the truth of God and to commend this woman and her children for loyalty to Christ and the truth.

IV Classification: Part of the General Epistles.

- A. James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, and Jude.
- B. This book is not a General Epistle, but is grouped with them because of its natural grouping with 1 John.

V. Place And Time

- A. The place of writing is not known.
 1. John spent his last years in Ephesus.
 2. It is possible he wrote letter from there.
 3. There is no way to be sure.
- B. Most think it was written late in John’s life. (1 Jn. 2:1; 2 Jn. 1:1), but this is not absolutely certain.
 1. There is not anything in the book that points to a date.

2. Dating is very subjective.

Salutation (1-4)

2JO 1:1 The elder to the chosen [elect] lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

1. The word “chosen” may mean:
 - a. “choice or excellent” (Rom. 16:13).
 - b. “Chosen” - 1 Pet. 1:1; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14; Matt. 24:31.
2. “whom I love in truth” - This is an anarthous construction. There is no definite article.
 - a. The idea may be “Because of devotion to Christ and gospel.”
 - b. Some think it is used adverbially meaning “sincerely, truly.”
 - 1) See 1 Jn. 3:18; 2 Jn. 3; 3 Jn. 1.
 - 2) The phrase does not appear to be merely adverbial, that is , a periphrasis for “truly.”
 - c. It seems both uses of “truth” refer to the truth delivered by the apostles. (Jn. 16:13).
3. “all who know the truth”
 - a. Truth is knowable. (Jn. 8:32; 1 Tim. 2:4).
 - b. The word “the” is used proceeding “truth.”

Notes:

1. The plural pronoun “whom” (Gr.ous) likely refers to this Christian lady and her children.
2. “Children” can be literal (1 Tim. 3:4) or spiritual. (Gal. 4:1j9, 25).
3. The children here were most likely her literal children who were faithful to Christ.
4. The words “in truth” in 3 John 1 are also anarthous.

2JO 1:2 for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever [into the age]:

1. “the truth” - The apostles were guided into “all truth.” (Jn. 16:13).
2. “us” - The pronoun “us” is used for Christians
3. Men seek to twist, bury, refute, and destroy the truth, but it stands. (Matt. 24:35).

2JO 1:3 Grace, mercy {and} peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the

Father, in truth and love.

1. “in truth” is anarthous.
2. “whom I love in truth” (2 Jn. 1:1).

Reason For Gladness

2JO 1:4 I was very glad to find {some} of your [singular] children walking [living] in truth, just as we have received commandment {to do} from the Father.

- Lit. “because I have found [some] of your children walking in truth...”
1. “certain” or “some” might mean that John had not met all of her children, but the ones he had met were faithful. It could mean that some of her children were not faithful.
 2. The words “in truth” do not have the article. (2 Jn. 1).

Not Writing A New Commandment

2JO 1:5 And now I ask you [singular], lady [kuria], not as writing to you [singular] a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.

1. The commandment to love is as old as man and one they had received from the beginning of their Christian experience.
2. Love is as old as mankind, and it was a very important part of the Mosaic law. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37-39).
3. The commandment is “new” in reference to the degree. (Jn. 13:34, 35). Jn. 15:2, 17; See 1 Jn. 3:11; 4:7, 11.

Proof Of Love

2JO 1:6 And this is love, that we walk [live] according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk [live] in it.

1. We prove love by keeping God’s commandments. (1 Jn. 5:3; Jn. 14:15).
2. They had been admonished to love one another from the time they had heard and received the gospel.
3. Love is the badge of discipleship. (Jn. 13:34, 35).

Deceiver And The Antichrist False teachers denied the humanity of Christ

2JO 1:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ {as} coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

1. “As coming” is a historical present meaning “has come.”
2. 1 Jn. 2:18; 4:3.

2JO 1:8 Watch yourselves, that you [plural] might not lose what we [or you] have accomplished, but that you [plural] may receive a full reward [wages].

New International: Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

Revised Standard: Look to yourselves, that you may not lose what you have worked for, but may win a full reward.

1. Their salvation and the salvation of others was at stake.
2. The false teachers were out to devour them. (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28-30).
3. The docetic gnostics denied the humanity of Christ and said He only appeared to be human.
4. They were forced to deny humanity because they believed matter is evil and Christ is good.

Gnostics Reason

Matter is evil	Matter is evil
If Christ was matter	Christ was good.
He must be evil.	He must not be flesh.

2JO 1:9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

- “proa’go” - goes ahead - RSV - “goes beyond” - TEV

New International: Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

Revised Standard: Any one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son.

“Teaching of Christ” or “Christ’s teaching”

1. Some take this to be subjective genitive - teaching that came from Christ. (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).
 - a. Teaching the humanity of Christ would certainly be a part of true teaching.
 - 1) Jesus was both God and man. (Matt. 1:23). See Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 3:16.
 - 2) The subjective includes teaching about Christ because it is a part of the teaching or doctrine of Christ.
 - b. Faithful teaching would not be limited to teaching the humanity of Christ only.
 - c. Acts 2:42 is an example to the subjective “the teaching of the apostles.” This is not primarily teaching about the apostles, but is teaching **from** the apostles.
 - d. Matthew 16:12 another example of the subjective genitive.

MAT 16:12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of **the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**

- e. See Rom. 6:17; 16:17; 1 Cor. 14:6, 26; Rev. 2:14, 15, 24.
- f. Heb. 6:2 is an exception. It is an objective genitive.

HEB 6:2 of **instruction [teaching] about washings**, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Lit. "the instruction of washings [baptisms]. NASB correctly translates "instruction about washings."

- 2. Some take this to be objective genitive - teaching about Christ (particularly His humanity).
 - a. Some of those who hold this position suggest the humanity of Christ was all John had in mind.
 - b. He certainly had this in mind, but the admonition included much more.
 - c. This interpretation is normally used to affirm open fellowship with few, if any, limitations.
 - d. We are not to fellowship anyone who simply confesses Jesus has come in the flesh.

2JO 1:10 If anyone comes to you [plural] and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into {your} [plural] house, and do not give him a greeting;

- "do not" implies she was given to hospitality.
- She was not to welcome and bid God speed to the false teachers.
- Lodging and provision of those engaged in false teaching would be aiding and encouraging the false teacher.

Note:

- 1. Churches usually met in home in the New Testament era. (Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 16:19; Phile. 2). Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15.)
- 2. He is not talking about entertaining strangers. (Heb. 13:2; 1 Tim. 5:10).
- 3. This usual greeting to a house is given in Luke 10:5.

LUK 10:5 "And whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.'
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- 4. It is certain that they were not to receive the one denying the incarnation of Christ.
- 5. It is not likely limited to that one false doctrine. This would not make sense.
- 6. What about those who would deny the virgin birth, Deity of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, etc.?
 - a. These are all foundational doctrines, that is, Christianity rests on them.
 - b. The denial of any of them destroys the foundation of Christianity. See 1 Cor. 15:12-19.

7. This warning probably does not refer to our every difference..

Here Are Some Non-Foundational Teachings

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kitchens• Use of any or all literature• The Bible translation used.• Giving to saints only out of treasury	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sending support to a congregation rather than directly to a preacher• Bible Classes• Exact mode of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.• Wearing the Veil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One cup• Old or new scriptural songs• Wine or grape juice• The use of “thee” and “thou”• Song leaders
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• **Some or all of these teachings are important, but these doctrines are not foundational.**

• **Christianity does not stand or fall with Bible classes, the use of one cup, etc.**

8. If this warning refers to fellowship of anyone who holds a different understanding of scripture on any point, this commandment becomes nearly impossible to keep.

9. False teachers must be stopped. (Tit. 1:10,11).

TIT 1:10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, TIT 1:11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.

10. This prohibits the Christian from showing hospitality to the ones engaged in false teaching.

a. It would not keep one from showing hospitality to a false teacher not engaged in false teaching and not using the home as a base of operation.

b. It is not prohibiting one from having someone in his home that held one or more false doctrines.

11. He is not talking about studying the Bible in your home with a false teacher. Studying the Bible with a false teacher and seeking to teach him the truth is not the same as letting him use your home as a base of operation.

2JO 1:11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates [shares] in his evil deeds.

1. The one who helps the false teacher spread his false teaching is just as guilty as the false teacher.

2. The “greeting” is defined in verse 10.

Final Greetings (13, 14)

2JO 1:12 Having many things to write to you [plural], I do not want to do so with paper [papyrus sheets] and ink; but I hope to come to you [plural] and speak face to face, that your [or our] joy may be made full. 3 Jn.13, 14.

• Lit. “speak mouth to mouth”

• “Paper” was papyrus sheets made from the pith of a reed which grew in the lowlands of Palestine and Egypt.

The sheets were glued together to form rolls.

2JO 1:13 The children of your [singular] chosen sister greet you [singular].

1. The “sister” here likely refers to this ladies’ literal sister and children.
 - a. It is assumed by some of those who believe this is a literal sister that the “sister” of verse 13 is deceased.
 - b. One can assume anything, but no information is here given.
2. The word “chosen” denotes she was a Christian - one who accepted the gospel call.(2 Thess. 2:14, 15).

Conclusion.

1. This little letter was probably written to a faithful Christian lady (perhaps name Cyria), but the message of the book is not changed if one views it as addressed to a local congregation.
2. The underlying theme is the book is “walking in truth.”
3. It promotes love and the keeping of God’s commandments.
4. Christians are to be hospitable and especially to those sharing the gospel, but are not to aid and encourage false teachers.
5. John believes in absolute truth, and admonishes Christians to continue to stand for it. See Jude 3.

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