

Cover to Cover: From Genesis to Maps
Sermon # 63 – “2 John”
October 4, 2009

2 John: Some Background Information

Authorship: Historically, the authorship of this letter has been attributed to the Apostle John. The writer identifies himself only as “the elder.” Apparently, those receiving this letter were quite familiar with the author. The term “elder” in this instance does not necessarily refer to one holding the office of elder in a local church. Rather, it seems to have been a term of affection and respect for an older and revered leader in the Christian community. Indeed, the elderly John, as the last surviving apostle of Jesus, would have held a special place of respect and authority in the life of the early New Testament church.

It should also be noted that in view of the similarity in style and content between 1 and 2 John, the same arguments that point to John’s authorship for the larger epistle are valid for the smaller one as well.

Audience: *“the chosen lady and her children”* - This is a unique designation for the recipient(s) of a New Testament letter. Interpreters are divided and have offered differing views as to the actual meaning of this phrase: (1) It is a figurative reference to a local church and its members. (2) It is a figurative reference to the church universal. (3) It is a literal reference to an actual woman and her children. The majority of modern scholars favor the first option.

Date: The Second Epistle of John very likely was written during the same general time frame as First John, probably about A.D. 90-95.

Purpose: The Apostle John wrote this epistle to (1) warn his readers against the heresy of denying the humanity of Christ (v. 7); (2) exhort them in their practice of Christian love (v. 5); and (3) encourage them to live a life of faithfulness and obedience unto the Lord (v. 4, 6).

Key Words: “truth” (5 times), “love” (4 times), “command” or “commandment” (4 times), “walk” (3 times), “teaching” (3 times), “children” (3 times).

Length: The Second Epistle of John is the second shortest book in the New Testament (second only to Third John). Both Second John and its twin epistle, Third John, might well be referred to as “postcards” rather than letters because of their relative brevity. John’s Second Epistle consists of a mere 13 verses and it contains only 245 words in the original Greek text.

Theme: Walking in Truth and Love

2 John: An Outline

1. Introduction: Salutation. v. 1-3

- The sender. v. 1a
- The recipient. v. 1b-2
- The greeting. v. 3
 - "Grace" - getting what you don't deserve (i.e., forgiveness)
 - "Mercy" - not getting what you do deserve (i.e., punishment)
 - "Peace" - wholeness/ well-being/ inner peace

2. Practicing the Truth / Putting God's Love into Practice v. 4-6

- Walking in the Truth. v. 4
 - God's Truth in action brings rejoicing.
- Walking in Love. v. 5-6
 - Christ's command is remembered. v. 5 (John 13:34-35)
 - Christ's command is repeated. v. 6 (John 14:21-24)

3. Protecting the Truth. v. 7-11

- Beware of those that deny God's Truth. v. 7
- Be alert to their dangerous deceptions. v. 8
- Continue in Christ's teachings. v. 9
- Refuse to assist or associate with false teachers. v. 10-11

4. Conclusion. v. 12-13.

- The value of face-to-face communication. v. 12
- Your sister's kids send their regards. v. 13