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2. JOHN

*Don't help false teachers!*

WRITTEN

90-95 AD

KEY VERSE

*"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work."*

vv. 10-11

Last updated March 12, 2023

Remind them to love one another and not help false teachers.

PURPOSE

## INTRODUCTION

The author does not mention his name, but 2 John has enough similarities with 1 John and the Gospel of John that John most likely wrote this letter as tradition says. The recipients of the letter are called *"the chosen lady"* and *"her children"* (v. 1). It is common to interpret this as a congregation with its "spiritual" children.

Johannes has two purposes in writing this short letter. The first purpose is to remind them to love one another and live according to God's commandments (vv. 5-6). These two are closely related because *"this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands"*.

In addition, he is writing because of some false teachers, and it is probably the same situation as in 1 John: False teachers deny the incarnation (v. 7), and as in 1 John, he calls them *"antichrists"*. The second purpose is to ask the congregation not to receive these false teachers (v 10-11). In the first two centuries, the gospel was spread by itinerant evangelists and teachers. Christians welcomed them into their homes and gave them what they needed on their journey. Itinerant false teachers also made use of this practice, and John says they must be careful what theology the visitors have so that they do not become complicit in the evil the false teachers do by spreading false teachings.

Johannes is concerned with the truth. Therefore, he opens by mentioning *"truth"* 4 times. All who have come to know the truth love other Christians because *"the truth dwells in us"* and will be with us forever. He may be thinking of Jesus as the Truth when he writes this. The truth is so important that they must be theologically aware and not accept anyone who works against God's truth or Jesus.

2 John is usually dated to AD 90-95.

## 2 JOHN

*"The elder [John], To the lady chosen by God [the church (1 Pet 5:13)] and to her children [the members], whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth— because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son, will be with us in truth and love. It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 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. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work. I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings."*

## OPENING AND GREETINGS (VV. 1-3)

Truth, love, and Christology are themes carried over from 1 John. John is still against heresy. Everyone who knows the truth loves other Christians because the truth (Jesus?) lives in us.

## 1. PURPOSE: LIVE IN TRUTH AND LOVE (VV. 4-6)

*"It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love."* vv. 4-6

**Same 3 tests:**

The truth is a life according to God's commandments and love for the Christian community.

Love is living according to His commandments (plural), but the commandment (singular) is that we should love one another. We keep all the commandments when we keep the one commandment to love one another. (Romans 13:8)

Paul encourages them to stick to what they learned in the beginning because there is much false teaching.

## 2. PURPOSE: DO NOT ACCEPT FALSE TEACHERS (VV. 7-11)

*"I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 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. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work."* vv. 7-11

Anyone who goes beyond the teachings of Jesus and the apostles does not have God. It is still about remaining in Jesus and His teachings. If a traveling teacher does not have the teachings of Christ, they should not be hospitable and help him on his journey. Helping to spread heresy is evil.

## TIMELESS TRUTHS

1. Don't go beyond the teachings of the Bible.
2. Love other Christians.
3. Do not contribute to spreading false teachings.