

2 John

Background

- Debate concerning the authorship of the letter may be found as early as the late 100's.
- However, the Muratorian Canon (~115 AD) includes 2 John in its table of contents.
- Some have suggested that the author was John the Elder rather than John the Apostle, but they are likely the same person.
- All suppose the letter to be written later than most of the New Testament. According to Polycarp, this would place John in Ephesus.
- Some assume this letter was written after 100 AD, some say as late as 130, because it "must" coincide with the rise of Gnosticism.
- Some place the writing in 85 – 90 AD because of a reference by Papias, who wrote around 150 AD. They assume that Papias was correct.

The Text

- (1) The "elect lady" may be the church or may be a faithful woman named Kuria. Some lean toward Kuria because of v10.
- (1 – 2) Truth here is used almost interchangeably with Spirit. Compare this to Jesus comment in John 4:20 – 24. John encouraged Kuria with the fact that many feel this same kinship with her. John's choice of verb tense, "have known," would include all the faithful, not just those who are still breathing.
- (3) John enlarged on Paul's common theme of "grace and peace" by inserting "mercy" and giving where they may be found, "in truth and love." The original audience already had been experienced the grace and mercy of God, so John is focused on grace, peace, and mercy in each Christian: a gracious character, an overwhelming desire to fix what ails the unbeliever, and peace with oneself, others, and God. Truth and love are the dwelling place of grace, mercy, and peace.
- (4) Encouragement 2: John expressed his joy at encountering the fruits of Kuria's labor. Just as importantly, John reminded Kuria that evangelism is a natural result of trusting God and loving people.
- (5 – 6) John reminds Kuria that his directions were not anything new, perhaps in contrast to the many "new" teachings that church people have invented from the time of the apostles until now. The commandment is that we love one another.
- (7) The only other mentions of "antichrist" are in 1 John 2:22 and 1 John 4:3. Many antichrists have arisen, both in John's time until our time. John characterizes them as those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh. Few today make this claim in those words, probably because of the writing of John. But many teach a description of Jesus that amounts to the same thing, that Jesus did not have the ability to choose badly. Compare to Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15.
- (8 – 11) John listed dire consequences to this teaching that denies the humanity of Jesus.
 - This can be the root cause of falling away, reverting to unbelief (or, belief in a deception).
 - John characterizes this teaching as "going ahead:" supposedly advanced teaching. The result is to lose touch with God.
 - Those who teach such things are to be excluded from the family of God, to the point of not greeting them. Only three types of people are to be excluded:
 - Those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh.
 - Those who are divisive (Jude 19, Titus 3:10).

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- Those whose behavior is so outrageous that unbelievers will no longer listen to the gospel (1 Corinthians 5).
- (12) John's reason for not committing everything to writing is that face-to-face contact is more encouraging, bringing more joy. Perhaps Paul used letters when he did not anticipate having that opportunity in a reasonable period of time. The exception would be 2 Corinthians, which Paul wrote to stimulate and encourage them for his impending arrival.
- (13) John sends greeting either from Kuria's nieces and nephews, or from the congregation where John was located. Either way, the purpose was encouragement.