

Aquifer Open Study Notes (Book Intros)

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This resource has been adapted into multiple languages, including English, Tok Pisin, Arabic (عربي), French (Français), Hindi (हिन्दी), Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), Portuguese (Português), Russian (Русский), Spanish (Español), Swahili (Kiswahili), and Simplified Chinese (简体中文).

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2 John

Second John is the shortest book in the New Testament. It has only thirteen verses. In ancient times, the whole letter could fit on one sheet of papyrus paper. The first letter of John explained the principles of remaining true to God, loving fellow Christians, and being cautious of false teachers. This letter shows how to apply these principles in a real-life situation.

Setting

The setting of 2 John is similar to that of 1 John. False teachers were traveling in Asia Minor, spreading heresy (a false belief) about Jesus known as Docetism. These false teachers denied the apostle's teaching that Jesus, the divine Christ, had a real human body. They taught that it only seemed like his body was real.

They were also convincing others to believe this. These false teachers were probably the heretics John mentioned in his first letter. Some church members, influenced by this teaching, had left to form a new group. The apostle John urged the Christians in Asia Minor to remain strong in their faith, understand the truth about Jesus Christ, and love one another.

Summary

This personal letter starts with a greeting ([1:1-3](#)). Then it shares the author's wishes ([1:4-11](#)). John wanted the people to continue following the truth and to keep showing love to one another. He warns Christians about false teachers who may come among them. He encourages them to hold on to the apostles' teachings about Jesus Christ to receive their full reward.

He also tells them not to welcome false teachers into their meetings or homes or to help them in any way. They should not even wish them well. That is because doing so would support their false beliefs. John ends his letter with a promise to visit soon and sends greetings from the church.

Author

Some scholars believe that a different John wrote this letter instead of the apostle ([1:1](#)). However, there are strong reasons to conclude that John the apostle wrote these letters (see 1 John Book Introduction, “Author”).

Recipients

Second John describes the audience as "the chosen lady and her children" ([1:1](#)). This might refer to a woman named Kyria and her children. The Greek word *kyria*, which means "lady," can be the name of a person.

However, it is more likely that John was referring to a specific local church as "the chosen lady" and its members as "her children" (see [1 Peter 5:13](#)). If this is the case, 2 John was probably sent to one of the churches under John's care in Asia Minor.

Meaning and Message

The message of 2 John has two main points:

1. Members of the Christian community must love each other ([1:5](#)). This love should follow Jesus's commands ([1:6](#)).
2. John warns the church about false teachers who must be exposed, avoided, and rejected.

Many of the New Testament letters were written to deal with false teaching. Several of Paul's letters address this problem:

- In Galatians, Paul warned against those who were turning away from the true good news ([Galatians 1:6](#)).
- In Colossians, he opposed rules and practices that were misleading the believers ([Colossians 2:16-23](#)).
- In 2 Thessalonians, he corrected wrong ideas about the Lord's return ([2 Thessalonians 2:1-3](#)).
- In 1 Timothy, he warned about deceptive spirits and false knowledge ([1 Timothy 4:1; 6:20-21](#)).

Peter wrote his second letter to counter false teachers ([2 Peter 2:1-22](#)). Jude wrote his letter for the same reason ([Jude 1:3-4](#)). John's letters opposed dangerous teachings as well. Some of these were early forms of Gnosticism (a belief that secret knowledge could save people) and Docetism (the belief that Jesus only seemed to be human). These wrong teachings were harming many of the early churches.