

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND LETTER OF JOHN

There is no doubt that the Second and Third Letters of John are from the same writer. Also they show strong evidence in thought and language which link them to the First Letter of John. Compare *1 John 2:7* with *2 John 5; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-3* with *2 John 7; 1 John 2:23* with *2 John 9; 1 John 3:6, 9* with *3 John 11*.

The false teachers mentioned in *1 John 2:18-29* were imitating the evangelists (see note on *Eph. 4:11*) whom John was sending out (see note on *3 John 5-8*). These false evangelists were going from place to place and victimizing the churches of Christ. John warns the Lady not to show hospitality to these false teachers (which she can identify because they will not declare The Christ came as a human being). John makes it plain that Christian love is not intended to encourage or help those who are motivated by the spirit of the Enemy of Christ!!!

John must have written many such letters, as he supervised the messianic community (congregations) in a way that only an *apostle* had the authority to do. Such short letters as Second and Third John might have been ignored, if it were not for the fact that they came from John, the loved apostle. John probably wrote from Ephesus to churches in the area, and the time is probably the last decade of the first century.

THE SECOND LETTER OF JOHN

¹From the Elder—

To the dear Lady and to her children, whom I truly love. I am not the only one, but all who know the truth love you, ²because the truth remains in us and will be with us forever.

³May God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, give us grace, mercy, and peace; may they be ours in truth and love.

Truth and Love

⁴How happy I was to find that some of your children live in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵And so I ask you, dear Lady: let us all love one another. This is no new command I write you; it is the command which we have had from the beginning. ⁶This love I speak of means that we must live in obedience to God's commands. The command, as you have all heard from the beginning, is this: you must all live in love.

The Elder

To the chosen lady and her children, 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 living by 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 live in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you live a life of love.

1. **From the Elder.** *Elder* was often used as a *title of respect*, and it is the aged John the apostle who so speaks of himself here. **To the dear Lady.** Women played a larger part in the first century church than they often are given credit for. See Lydia (*Acts 16:40*), Nymphia (*Col. 4:15*), etc. [No one knows for sure whether Lady (Kyria) is a title or a name, or whether this is a real woman, or whether John speaks of the church as a *dear Lady*. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* takes Kyria as a real woman.] **Who know the truth.** John's love for this Lady and her children is in their common fellowship in the Truth of Christ!

2. **Because the truth.** Compare *John 15:16-17*. John is confident that the truth will be with us forever, that is *available forever*, and he is confident that the truth will remain in all who love the truth for what it is.

3. **May God.** This is John's word of blessing, from both God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. **May they be ours.** See *1 John 2:24*.

4. **How happy.** "I talked with some of your children, and I was happy to find they live in the truth of love!" John writes to warn the Lady about false teachers. It would be a pleasant surprise for him to meet faithful Christians, after battling with the other kind. **The Father commanded.** "The commandment is Love; Love is living according to His commandments; His commandments are summed up in Love!"

5. **And so I ask you.** John speaks in a personal way. **Let us all love.** Love forms the basis of the Good News, because it was *love* which caused God to act in Christ to set men free. See note on *1 John 2:7*.

6. **Means that we must live.** Christian love is not an "ooey-gooey feeling in the tummy," but a very practical way of living in truth. [The other forms of love are valid in their sphere.] Compare *1 John 5:3; John 14:15, 23*. Christian love imitates the life of Christ (*1 John 2:7* and note).

⁷Many deceivers have gone out over the world, men who do not declare that Jesus Christ came as a human being. Such a person is a deceiver and the Enemy of Christ. ⁸Watch yourselves, then, so that you will not lose what you have worked for, but will receive your reward in full.

⁹Anyone who does not stay with the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God. Whoever does stay with the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If anyone comes to you, then, who does not bring this teaching, do not welcome him in your home; do not even say, "Peace be with you." ¹¹For anyone who wishes him peace becomes his partner in the evil things he does.

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come 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 you 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 him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

7. **Many deceivers.** "The truth is that Jesus is The Christ, the Logos in human form. Those who live in truth believe this and love one another. Many follow the spirit of the Enemy of Christ, and deny this is true. I warn you against such people." **The Enemy of Christ.** Note that *each* person who denies that Jesus Christ came as a human being is The Enemy of Christ (The Antichrist). John speaks of *not one*, but *many*, who by their failure to love truth, oppose Christ and the Good News.

8. **Watch yourselves.** "Do not let anyone fool you and steal away your promise!" Although we do not *earn* our salvation, still there is a human response that is necessary. Compare what John said in *John 4:36; 6:27*. **Your reward in full.** Eternal life. See *1 John 2:25*.

9. **Anyone who does not stay.** "Some say that being put right with God through Christ is all right to begin with, but that you must *progress* on to '*higher things*.' But do not be fooled by such talk! Anyone who *progresses away* from the teaching of Christ does not have God!" **Whoever does stay.** "If you remain faithful to the teaching of Christ and his apostles, you *have both* the Father and the Son!" See *1 John 5:12*.

10. **Who does not bring this teaching.** "If someone comes who claims to be a brother, but does not bring this teaching that Jesus Christ came as a human being to be the means of our salvation, then have nothing to do with him!" John connects *love* with *truth* and the *commandment*. One who purposely denies the basic fact of the Logos in human form, and so destroys the "act of God in Christ," cannot be allowed to continue as part of the messianic community (church). Compare *Rom. 16:17; Phil. 3:17*.

11. **For anyone.** "This is not a simple misunderstanding, but a deliberate attempt to destroy Christ's church! Since these people have made themselves the Enemies of Christ, you must treat them as such!" This does not conflict with *Mark 9:38-39* (see notes there) or with *Phil. 1:15-18* (see notes there). What John says here must be viewed in the seriousness of the circumstances. She must not do anything that might give this false teacher any *hint* of help in his work of destroying the faith!!!

Final Words

¹²I have so much to tell you, but I would rather not do it with paper and ink; instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you personally, so that we shall be completely happy.

¹³The children of your dear Sister send you their greetings.

I have much to write to ¹² 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 ¹³ chosen sister send their greetings.

12. **So much to tell you.** John may have more to say about the false teachers. Perhaps he does not want to write any more harsh things, which could be *taken the wrong way*. And it would be much better if he were there personally, to see firsthand what was necessary. The aged John looks forward to seeing this dear Lady.

13. **The children.** If the Lady is a real woman, then these would be the children of her sister, who were with John. They are Christians also. *Note:* Christian love is an act of will. It is treating others as God has treated us in Christ. Then, it is something that anyone and everyone has the ability to learn *as a Christian*. Christian love also involves doing God's will. By imitating God's character (He is love), we make our lives a *living sacrifice* to praise and honor Him! See *1 John 3:16-17; 5:2*.