**2 John - Introduction**

*“And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it” (5-6).*

**Book in a Nutshell**

A short letter written to “the elect lady and her children” exhorting them to love, obedience, acceptance of Jesus’ humanity and doctrinal fidelity.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is the significance, if any of John referring to himself as “The elder”?

2. What trait of John’s do you most admire? Please give a scripture citation that shows this trait.

3. Identify some of the terms most commonly used in the text of 2 John. Do these give an idea of the purpose of John’s writing?

4. What argument would you use to contend the letter was written to a Christian lady (individual)? Is this argument compelling?

5. What argument would you use to contend the lady was not an individual, but a figurative term referring to “the church” or a particular congregation? Is this argument compelling?

**Authorship**

* The author does not explicitly identify himself in the text. Instead, as in 3 John, he refers to himself as “The elder” (Greek, *presbuteros*).
* The writer has unanimously been recognized (from the time of writing) as the apostle John, who also wrote the gospel of John, as well as 1 & 3 John.
* Numerous themes and phrases found in 1 John are also present in 2 John. It is obvious the letters (as well as 3 John) were written by the same hand.

**John the Apostle**

* Together with James, sons of Zebedee (Mark 1:20)
* One of the best known of the disciples, and often mentioned with Peter (Acts 4:13; 8:14-25)
* Wrote the gospel of John, 1, 2 & 3 John, and the book of Revelation (about 20% of the New Testament)

**Date of Writing: (90 A.D.)**

* John refers to himself as an elderly man.
* Though there is nothing in either 2 or 3 John to indicate either the time or place of writing, it is believed likely that they were written near the time of the writing of 1 John, (due to similarities in the text of each epistle), and near the end of the apostle’s life.

**Persons Addressed**

* *“The elect lady and her children*.” A faithful woman, to whom John writes to rejoice with her in because of the faithfulness of her children. (She is not identified).
* Another possibility: A letter to the whole church (the bride of Christ), or to a particular congregation. If so, the children would be the members of that congregation. Why? 1) It is implausible that a single lady would be known and admired *by “all those who have known the truth,”* vs. 1; and, 2) The use of the plural in verses (6,8,10,12), and the singular in verses (1,4,5,13), could indicate a church. It is common to address a church in a singular fashion when considering it collectively, and in the plural when thinking of individual members.

**2 John - Text**

*“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (9-11).*

**Book in a Nutshell**

A short letter written to “the elect lady and her children” exhorting them to love, obedience, acceptance of Jesus’ humanity and doctrinal fidelity.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why can the concept of love be considered a common and fundamental one to Christians?

2. How can love be defined correctly as commandment keeping? How does this differ from current views about loving God?

3. Please define “antichrist.”

4. Can the “doctrine of Christ” be understood as referring to things other than His humanity? How inclusive is it?

5. Why does John forbid eating with a false teacher?

*(Please put answers on back of page or another sheet of paper)*

**John’s Greeting (1-3)**

* *“The elder, to the elect lady and her children”* (1)
* John expresses his love for them, indicating his love for them is because of their common love of truth (2)
* A common greeting among Christians (3). Note the frequent use of the terms “truth” and “love” found in the epistle.

**Exhortation to Obedience (4-6)**

* John first expresses joy at the faithfulness of the lady and her children, *“walking in truth”* (4)
* The exhortation in (5) is to continued faithfulness, defined by John, *“that we love one another.”* God joins love and obedience together by definition.
* *“This is love, that we walk according to His commandments.”* (6)
* The commandment to love was one present at the beginning of the church, and is foundational to being a Christian (6)

**Fellowship and False Teaching (7-11)**

* John identifies a characteristic of the incipient Gnostic heresy - a denial of Christ’s humanity (7)
* John calls them to avoid this error (8)
* John further identifies a “litmus test” regarding fellowship with God… abiding in the “doctrine of Christ” (literally – the “Messiah’s teaching”) (9)
* John indicates that association with a false teacher is an endorsement of his false teaching *(“shares” – koinoneo – joint participation, fellowship)* (10-11)

**John’s Farewell (12-13)**

* John acknowledged that the preferred means of communication was face to face. Perhaps it is for this reason that the letter was so short (12)
* Verse 12 would indicate that the letter was to an individual or particular congregation rather than to the church as a whole.
* Greetings are forwarded by John (perhaps from another congregation? (13)