



Truth

WALKING IN TRUTH

2 John 1

Teaching Notes

INTRO

We've been studying the letters that make up the General Epistles. So far we've studied Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and 1 John. Today, we look at 2 John. Our word for how we see Jesus in 2 John is *Truth*. This comes from 2 John 1:4, "I was very glad to find some of your children walking in the truth." Mindi's painting for 2 John has a Bible. This is the first time Mindi has painted a Bible, and it represents the *Truth* which Jesus fulfills in the Word. Read the first three verses of 2 John, and you'll see the word *Truth* used repeatedly. Christ is the *Truth*. Second John is the second letter of three.

MacArthur states that 2 and 3 John "present the closest approximation in the New Testament to the conventional letter form of the contemporary Greco-Roman world, since they were addressed from an individual to individuals."¹ These are the shortest epistles in the New Testament, containing less than 300 Greek words. Second John is so short it would have fit on one sheet of papyrus paper. Like 1 John, 2 and 3 John were written by the apostle John. In 2 John 1, John identified himself as "The Elder." At this point, John was advanced in age and the last apostle alive who had been with Jesus. The date of him writing this letter is unknown, but it was possibly written from Ephesus in his later years (AD 90–95).²

Second John addressed the same problems as 1 John—the rise of false teachers within the church (1 John 2:18-19, 22, 23). In 2 John, John addresses the itinerant teachers in John's churches who were pulling members away from Jesus, who is *Truth*. The false teachers were using Christian hospitality to get into members' homes and then leading them away from Jesus. This is the same situation that was in 3 John as well.³

MacArthur explains 2 John "parallels 1 John's theme of a 'recall to the fundamentals of the faith' or 'back to the basics of Christianity' (v. 4–6). For John, the basics of Christianity are summarized by adherence to the truth (v. 4), love (v. 5), and obedience (v. 6)."⁴ These fundamentals also provide guidelines for providing Christian hospitality (Romans 12:13). Christian hospitality is walking out faith while ministering in your home. However, John issued a warning of how Christian hospitality should be offered.

TEACHING

2 John 1-3: John addressed this letter to "the elect lady and her children." Biblical scholars are not sure who this form of address included, but many interpret it literally—John addressed a specific woman and her children. John established himself in the role of authority and then included his standing with all those who knew the truth. In verse 2, John pointed out that Jesus is the eternal truth. In verse 3, John gave personal greetings to the family. He knew them on some level from his ministry.⁵

2 John 4-6: Wiersbe summarizes verses 4-6 as walking in the truth.⁶ These verses are practical in nature and explain how walking in the truth is accomplished. Since "some" of her children were walking in the truth, the context possibly suggests that some of her children were not (v. 4). John urged the lady to walk in truth through love—just as Jesus had told them to originally (v. 5). There had to be an issue in the church, or the family which John addressed, for him to write this again (v. 6).

2 John 7-11: Wiersbe summarizes verses 7-11 as instructions for abiding in the truth within the framework of Christian hospitality.⁷ John described the deceivers who did not confess Jesus Christ as Lord and combined their actions with those of "the deceiver" (Satan) and "the antichrist" (v. 7). Mark 13:22–23 describes these false teachers/deceivers. Mark used the term "the elect" to identify believers (1 Timothy 4:1–4; 1 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1). Because of these deceivers, John warned his audience to watch out for false teachers coming into their homes (v. 8). According to MacArthur, verse 7 is "the centerpiece of John's thought in this epistle . . . believers must be on guard against error by having an intimate acquaintance with the truth."⁸ John then

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), pp. 1971.

² MacArthur, p. 1971.

³ MacArthur, p. 1971.

⁴ MacArthur, p. 1971-1972.

⁵ MacArthur, p. 1972.

⁶ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: 2 John* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1989), p. 535.

⁷ Wiersbe, p. 537.

⁸ MacArthur, p. 1973.



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pointed out that those who do not remain in Christ's teachings but accept the false teachings did not have God (v. 9). "Going beyond" means to add on to God's Word things God didn't include. When we stick to God's teachings, we are walking in His truth. John instructed the lady to "not receive" anyone into her home who taught in contradiction to God's truth (v. 10).

MacArthur states, "These false teachers were carrying on a regular campaign to destroy the basic, fundamental truths of Christianity."⁹ Isn't that what Satan does today? In verse 11 John stated that allowing these people into the home means the host shares in the evil work of the false teachers. MacArthur explains, "Complete disassociation from such heretics is the only appropriate course of action for genuine believers."¹⁰ This is difficult for people with the gift of hospitality.

Three reasons why we should not allow false teachers into our home. By inviting a false teacher in:

1. We give the impression to neighbors that the false teachings have truth.
2. We can become infected by the false teachings.
3. We can let the truth be unguarded.¹¹

2 John 12–13: John concluded his letter by saying he had more to share than he could write and wanted to do it in person. John then gave more greetings from the lady's sister or from another congregation.

CLOSING

John's second letter was a warning—don't allow people who were false teachers to infiltrate believers' lives by trying to be nice or give Christian hospitality. They had already heard God's Truth and were now working against it.

⁹ MacArthur, p. 1973.

¹⁰ MacArthur, p. 1973.

¹¹ Wiersbe, p. 537-538.