

2 John: Notes to a Trusted Church

A reminder on method of interpretation:

1. *See*. First observe. See what *was*, then-and-there. Below this will be carried out by reading the text and at points explaining.
2. *Say*. State conclusions faithful to the then-and-there for the here-and-now. Below, sample (not all) conclusions will be listed in boxes.

- I. Greeting: John's Love in Truth (1-3)
- II. John's Joy Yet Concern (4-8)
- III. John's Warning (9-11)
- IV. John's Farewell (12-13)

I. Greeting: John's Love in Truth (1-3)

2 John 1 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, ² because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

2 John 3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.

1. The elder: By name and similarity with 1 and 3 John, John the son of Zebedee is the author. See 1 Peter 5:1 for Peter's self-designation as "elder."

2. "Not only I, but also all who know the truth": John voices the same sense of ecclesial solidarity as Paul. Was John perhaps addressing 2 John to the Ephesians congregation, as it would be the distribution center of 1 John? Did Paul's foundation-laying labor at Ephesus provide the springboard for John's longer term ministry there?

Eph 4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

3. "Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us": pastoral optimism matters. Notice its grounding in the living God.

II. John's Joy Yet Concern (4-8)

2 John 4 I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. ⁵ And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. ⁶ And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. ⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸ Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.

1. Note the interplay of truth, commandments, and love—head, hands (feet) and heart. TBC.
2. Notice OT reverb. Johannine theology does not introduce a new philosophy of religion. But reconceives OT godliness in the wake of Christ's fulfillment of the Scriptures and presence with believers via "the truth" of Christ abiding with them.
3. Concern: deceivers. They are many. They feature defective representation of Jesus Christ. Any such person is a "strayer" or one who causes others to stray.
4. Watch yourselves: Christian assurance comes about through consistent dedication over time.

III. John's Warning (9-11)

⁹ Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, ¹¹ for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

1. "Goes on ahead" = is guilty of what John warns against.
2. The teaching = the truth. The teaching by and about Christ is an indicator of possessing God or not.
3. Do not greet or host: probably refers to traveling missionaries like Gaius is commended for hosting in 3 John 5–8. Where the gospel flourishes, there will always be rivals and counterfeits.

IV. John's Farewell (12-13)

2 John 12 Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

2 John 13 The children of your elect sister greet you.

1. Largely repeats ending of 3 John.

2. "Joy complete": echoes Jesus' sentiment in the FG. The Beloved Disciple carries on heritage of what he and Jesus shared.

John 3:29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this **joy** of mine is now complete.

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your **joy** may be full.

John 16:20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into **joy**. 21 When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for **joy** that a human being has been born into the world. 22 So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your **joy** from you.

John 16:24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your **joy** may be full.

John 17:13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my **joy** fulfilled in themselves.

