

# Outline of 2 John

We hope this outline of 2 John will help you as you investigate the pages of God's holy Word — His personal letter to you.

This is the shortest book in the Bible — a mere 13 sentences. Some have questioned why it is in Scripture. Some have questioned who wrote it. Some have questioned who is the recipient. Some have questioned when it was written. But there are certain truths that are clear.

First, it is part of Scripture. As Donald Guthrie points out, the question of its authorship became a bigger problem in later church fathers' writings than it was in earlier ones. Irenaeus considered the book to be written by the Apostle John. The internal content of the book is closely related to John's other works. Thus, although the author is not directly mentioned by name, the testimony of the earliest church fathers appears correct — that it was written by the Apostle John.

Who was its recipient? The big debate has been whether the book was written to one lady or to a church. I take the view that it was written to a lady. Her children are mentioned. The children of her sister are mentioned. It seems most natural to conclude that this is a letter written to a special woman in the church.

And she was a special woman. Verse 1 tells us that all those who have known the truth love her. She was a special person in the early church.

I see one main purpose — one over-riding reason for the inclusion of the book in Scripture. It is a sharp warning against error in the church. Do not tolerate anti-Christ error.

Truth cannot be mixed with error. Truth mixed with error is not truth. Notice the many references to truth. We see at least five references: verse 1 (two times), verse 2, 3, and 4. Love is mentioned four times. Jesus is mentioned six times and the Father is mentioned six times. Then there are the references to deceivers and those who do not speak the truth.

Sometimes we think that to tolerate error is to exercise love. John makes it very clear that such is not the case. John states that we should not even receive such a person into our house nor greet him.

**Date:** 85 A.D. (?)

## **I. The Salutation 1-3**

- A. True love is based upon truth 1-2
- B. Blessings of God are in truth and love 3

## **II. Proper Exercise of Truth and Love 4-11**

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**Key Idea:** Love discriminates based upon truth

**Key Passage:** verse 8

**Key Lesson:** Love with truth