

2 John (November 29)

Reading 2 John

In this brief letter John stresses that the kernel of God's grace is Jesus Christ. "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" (verse 9).

The correct understanding of the person and work of Jesus is so essential to the gospel of God's grace that John warns, "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" (verses 10, 11). Since missionaries were dependent on the hospitality of fellow Christians, hospitality to false teachers would be equal to furthering false doctrine.

Author and Date

The author is John the apostle. Obvious similarities to 1 John and the Gospel of John suggest that the same person wrote all three books. The letter was probably written about the same time as 1 John (AD 85-95).

Occasion and Purpose

During the first two centuries the gospel was taken from place to place by traveling evangelists and teachers. Believers customarily took these missionaries into their homes and gave them provisions for the journey when they left. Since Gnostic teachers also relied on this practice, 2 John was written to urge discernment in supporting traveling teachers; otherwise, someone might unintentionally contribute to the propagation of heresy rather than truth.