

Three Short Bible Books!

Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John

June 14-28

Class 2, Wednesday, June 21, 2023 (2 John)

"It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us." 2 John 4

The Three Books

With only 3 weeks, I am teaching three short books. Philemon has 25 verses. 2 and 3 John have 27 verses total. Still, they are in the Bible for a reason—they have major lessons that are needed today!

The Book of 2 John

There are two challenging issues right up front, and commentators don't agree. Who wrote this book? And to whom was it written?

Who wrote the book? Traditionally, the Apostle wrote it, the same author as John, Revelation and 1st and 3rd John. There are good reasons. (1) The early church attributed it to the Apostle. (2) The writing style in all three (1-3 John) and John is quite similar.

Why is there doubt? 1 John doesn't claim an author. 2nd and 3rd are from "The Elder." An "Elder John" lived a few years after the Apostle. If "elder" meant "old man" it could be the Apostle, the last of the disciples. If a title, then it was probably written by "Elder John." Elder is a title for pastor/bishop/overseer.

To whom was it written? No names are mentioned except "to the lady chosen by God and to her children." It could be (1) a very well-known and well-loved lady, or (2) a church. The church is sometimes known as "The Bride of Christ."

My belief (I can't be dogmatic) is that it was written by the Apostle John to a church. "Her children" are the church members.

General Outline of 2 John

Despite the interpretative challenges, 2 John has much to offer, and the truths in it are clear no matter who wrote it and to whom it was written. It's one major lesson is highly needed today.

2nd and 3rd John are also as close as we come in the New Testament to the standard form of letter writing in the Greek-Roman world.

The outline below shows that form:

1. S _____ . 1-3
From "the elder" to "the lady chosen by God and her children," wishing her grace, mercy, and peace.
2. R _____ . 4
The elder has great joy to hear that "some" of her children are "w _____ ."
3. R _____ . 5-11
 - a. Reminder of "the command." L _____ . 5
 - i. Definition: O _____ . 6
 - ii. Restatement: W _____ . 6
 - b. Warning about d _____ . 7
 - i. Definition: D _____ . 7
 - ii. Warning: W _____ . 8-9
 - iii. Exhortation: D _____ . 10-11
4. P _____ . 12
I will come to you and talk f _____. This will bring both of us much joy.
5. F _____ . 13
The children of your "sister, who is chosen by God," (most likely members of John's church) greet you.

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