

## The Second Epistle of John

*...And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. (2 John 1:6)*

### 2 John 12-13

Someone read 2John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-13

Someone read v12:

Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full. (2 John 1:12 NASB)

Compare to 3Jn vv13-14

Does this similarity indicate that 2Jn or 3Jn was written by someone posing as the Apostle (as some commentators argue; eg., Bultmann).

Or, can the similarities be contrasted with the differences, to validate that John was indeed the author?

What differences do you notice?

Would not vs will not

Paper and ink vs ink and pen

The word 'write' (second appearance) does not occur in 2Jn, but is there in 3Jn

One commentator puts it like this: "The phrases closely resemble 3Jn 13, with just enough differences to reassure us that no copyist or imitator is at work).

The similarities reflect that one author was responsible for both letters, while differences aptly reflect the two different historical circumstances in which they were penned.

John had nearly filled his single papyrus sheet, the ink was drying, and he now turns to his final greeting to the Elect Lady and her children.

"I have many things to write to you..."

The word “many” is occurs first in the clause, which places emphasis on it. It is literally: ‘Many (things) though to you to write.’ This signifies that John has *many things* on his mind that he desires to communicate to his readers.

We don’t know precisely what these things were, but they were likely involving the false teachers that would soon come their way.

He was coming as a true teacher, not as the heretics.

“I do not wish to do so with paper and ink”

Literally, “not I wished through paper and ink.” The compressed expression implies “to write” (KJV), “to use” (NKJV, NIV), or “to do so” (NASB. NET).

“paper and ink” was the commonly used writing materials in that time and place. “Paper” translates the Greek *chartou* which sounds like what English word?

It designated a papyrus sheet, probably double-layered, which was commonly used for correspondence in John’s day. It was differentiated from the more expensive parchment Paul refers to in 2Tim 4:13.

“Ink” comes from a word that literally means “black.” It was derived from vegetable soot (burned grain) and gum, and moistened as needed. As the Greek word (*melanos*) implies, it was almost always black.

It has been suggested that John, feeling his advancing years, did not have the energy to keep writing (Plummer). But does this supposition make any sense?

“I hope to visit you...”

Considering the available methods of travel in those days, the journey would have likely been more arduous than merely writing one’s concerns.

Why do you think John chose to visit his readers personally?

He loved them

Oral communication is more accurate than writing. It has been proven that most communication is non-verbal.

But, if John did not write anything, we wouldn’t have 2Jn!

“Face to face”

Literally, “mouth to mouth to speak.” Signifies the intense intimacy made possible by a personal encounter.

John is confident that his presence will have a profound effect on his readers:

“That our joy may be complete.”

Someone read the last part on v12 in the NIV. It reads as above.

Now, someone read it in the NASB.

What difference do you notice?

The Greek MSS are pretty much evenly divided between “your joy” and “our joy.”

The Greek has a single letter difference between the 2 words (*humōn* = your vs *hēmōn* = our).

If we accept “your joy” as the correct reading, John refers to the effect his presence will have on his readers. If “our joy” is correct, John expresses his confidence that his presence will lead to a fullness of joy for both him and his readers.

Which do you think sounds most like the disciple Jesus loved?

John uses an interesting term for “complete” or “made full:” *Plērōma*. It was a term for the Gnostic god. The Gnostics conceived of god as being the ineffable ‘fullness’ of the universe, which generated various *Aeons*, or demi-gods, one of which was the Christ.

John may have been contrasting true joy (available through Christian fellowship) with the false “joy” available through Gnosticism and fellowship with the false teachers.

DISCLAIMER: I have not seen any commentator make this point.

Let’s conclude this little gem of a letter by reading v13:

The children of your chosen sister greet you. (2 John 1:13 NASB)

Presumably, these children were members of the church in Ephesus, and they had been in touch with John and knew he was corresponding with their aunt. We may infer that they were solid members of the Ephesian church, and were no doubt walking in the truth as were the Lady’s own children (v4). They may have even been the ones who warned John about their aunt being fooled by the false teachers.

See v10

Was the Lady’s sister saved? She was ‘chosen’ (Greek *ekletēs*).

The “your” is singular. What do you think this signifies?

Let’s review the arguments surrounding the Elect Lady:

1. It is a literal lady and her children
  - a. First rule of Biblical Hermeneutics (Interpretation): When the literal sense makes sense then seek no other sense.
  - b. It is the most natural understanding
  - c. There are no examples of “lady” being used of a local church in the Bible, unless this is the lone exception
2. It is a metaphor for a local church
  - a. The warning about showing hospitality to false teachers is more appropriate for all members of a local church than to a single household.
  - b. John changes from the second person singular in vv4-5, to plural in vv6, 8, 10, and 12, and back again to singular in verse 13). See the KJV which uses “Thy” for singular, and “you” for plural.
    - i. But, who is John writing to (1)?
  - c. The sister mentioned in v13 is most likely a sister church, perhaps the church from which John was writing
    - i. See 1Peter 5:13

D. Edmond Hiebert makes a strong argument in favor of the first view:

1. The greeting comes from the children, not the sister.
2. It can hardly be granted if John was referring to a local church metaphorically, that he would send greetings from individual members, and not from the church itself.
3. This would imply that the individual members were out-of-step with the church leadership, and out-of-step with John.
4. If the Lady has a literal sister in v13, she must be a literal Lady herself in v1.

Come back next week and we'll summarize our study of 2Jn and begin our study of 3Jn.