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Message #1

Various Texts

QUESTION #1 – Why study II John?

Reason #1 - Because II John is one of the rare 66 books in the Word of God.

II John has been identified as a book of the Bible since the earliest days of the church. It was listed as belonging in God's Word in the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170); the Apostolic Canon (A.D. 300); and the Athanasius Canon (A.D. 367). II John was listed as a book of the Bible in the Old Latin Translation (A.D. 200). It was also deemed to be a book of the Bible at the Council Meetings of Hippo (A.D. 393); Carthage (A.D. 397) and again at Carthage (A.D. 419). It was quoted as being a book in God's Word by Polycarp (A.D. 110) and Irenaeus (A.D. 130).

Reason #2 - Because II John is a very unique book.

As far as number of verses, it is the shortest book—II John has 13 verses and III John has 14 verses. Actually, in number of words, III John is the smallest book—II John has 245 words and III John has 219 words.

Reason #3 - Because II John was written by a man at the last part of his life.

He was the “beloved” apostle; but even in his older years, he could still function as the “Son of Thunder.”

Reason #4 - Because II John is very practical.

II John is a book that demands we be able to discern true teachers from false teachers. This is not just a demand for leaders in the church, but for every person in the church, including the women in the church.

QUESTION #2 – Who wrote II John?

(Reason #1) - Those who lived closest to the writing said it was written by John the apostle.

- 1) Irenaeus (A.D. 140-203), in his work “Against Heresies” quotes from II John two times and says, “John, the disciple of the Lord, has intensified their condemnation, when he desires us not even to address to them the salutation of ‘good speed.’” He then quotes II John 11.
- 2) Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 155-215) in his writings speaks of John's “longer Epistle,” indicating that he recognized at least one other shorter epistle that had been written by the Apostle John.

3) Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage (A.D. 200-259), in his account of a council meeting held in Carthage, in A.D. 256, says that Aurelius, another bishop, quoted II John 10-11 and said that “John the apostle laid it down in his Epistle” (concerning the baptism of heretics).

(Reason #2) - The author simply refers to himself as “The Elder,” referring to John the apostle.

We know that the Apostle John was a “pillar of the Church” (Gal. 2:9). We also believe this was written very late in the first century, which means John was the only living apostle.

(Reason #3) - The style of the letter proves it was written by John the apostle.

There are many similarities between other writings we know came from John the apostle and II John, proving the Apostle John wrote II John. **1)** II John 5 – I John 2:7 – John 13:34-35; **2)** II John 6 – John 5:3 – John 14:23; **3)** II John 7 – I John 4:2-3; **4)** II John 12 – I John 1:4; John 15:11; 16:24; **5)** The word “truth” occurs five times in II John, nine times in I John; **6)** The word “love” occurs four times in II John and 39 times in I John; **7)** The word “walk” occurs three times in II John and four times in I John; **8)** The word “command” occurs four times in II John and 14 times in I John. Clearly II John was written by the Apostle John.

(Reason #4) - The title of the earliest manuscripts proves it was written by the Apostle John.

Why would it be named John B if there were no John A?

QUESTION #3 – To whom was II John written?

The original letter of II John was written to a person John identified as: 1) Chosen lady (1, 5) and 2) Her children (1, 4).

(Interpretation #1) - It was written to a literal lady and her children.

- 1) It allows for a literal interpretation of the literal words.
- 2) It allows for a logical explanation of her grown children. 1, 4
- 3) It allows for a logical interpretation of her sister. 13
- 4) It allows for a logical interpretation of her nieces and nephews. 13

(Interpretation #2) - It was written to a figurative lady and her children.

- 1) The church was known to be under the elder’s supervision—explains opening “the elder.”
- 2) The lady is known universally by all who love truth—possible the church. What woman?
- 3) The lady is not specifically named nor is her children—possible figurative interpretation.
- 4) Plural endings on verbs mean more than just one person is in view; 8–“Watch **yourselves**”; 10–“Do not receive”; 10–“Do not give him.”
- 5) Plural pronouns are used indicating more than one person is in view: 12–“you” twice plural.
- 6) The “new commandment” (v. 5) makes more sense to the church, not one family.

7) There are times when the Church is personified in feminine form—Eph. 5:22-32; II Cor. 11:1-2; Rev. 19:7.

QUESTION #4 – When was II John written?

- 1) II John was written when John was aged—“the elder.” II John 1
- 2) II John was written after Christianity had reached a second generation. II John 1, 4, 13
- 3) II John was written after many false teachers had spread out in the world. II John 7
- 4) II John was written before the early Christian writers could quote it.

We believe it was written between A.D. 90-95 in the last days of John’s life.

QUESTION #5 – Why did the Apostle John write II John?

(Reason #1) - To establish the importance of learning and knowing the truth of God. 1-4

(Reason #2) - To establish the importance of always loving in the context of truth. 5-6

(Reason #3) - To establish the importance of identifying false teachers and religions. 7-8

(Reason #4) - To establish the importance of separating from false teachers and religions. 9-11

QUESTION #6 – What is the theme of II John?

Every believer, regardless of gender or age, is expected by God to love in the context of Biblical truth and is expected by God to identify those who are not presenting truth and separate themselves from them so he/she can receive full reward.