

# Second John Study

by Sandy Simpson

## Many Deceivers Have Gone out

### Title and Background

*During the first two centuries A.D., 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 their journey when they left. Since Gnostic teachers also relied on this practice, Second John was written to urge discernment in supporting traveling teachers.*

### Author and Date of Writing

*The apostle John is the author of this letter. According to the NIV Bible, John most likely wrote the book at about the same time as First John, about A.D. 90. The Biblical Studies Foundation makes a very strong argument that Second and Third John were probably written much earlier in about A.D. 66-67, so Second John, Third John, and Jude could have all been written about the same time. Note these obvious similarities between First and Second John: 2 John 5 and 1 John 2:7; 2 John 6 and 1 John 5:3; 2 John 7 and 1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 12 and 1 John 1:4 (NIV Compact Reference Bible, [c] 1989, Zondervan Corporation).*

***2 John 1:1 The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth— 2 because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever:***

It is interesting that John in his writings, unlike Peter and Paul, never refers to himself as an “apostle” but as an “elder.” He probably uses this not as an official reference, but because he is now old and has survived all the other disciples. He was, at the time of this writing, probably the only remaining apostle alive as all the others had been martyred. John was persecuted for his faith and imprisoned on Patmos for preaching the Gospel. It is recorded by the pre-Nicean fathers that John had even been put in a pot of boiling oil, but was taken out of it unharmed. But the other disciples were all martyred for their faith, except for Judas who hung himself. Notice how far the Gospel had spread by the time John wrote Second John in this partial list of the disciples who were martyred.

- Peter was crucified, head downward, during the persecution of Nero.
- Andrew died on a cross at Patrae in Achaia, a Grecian colony.
- James, the younger brother of the Savior, was thrown from a pinnacle

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- of the Temple, and then beaten to death with a club.
- Bartholomew was flayed alive in Albanapolis, Armenia.
- James, the elder son of Zebedee, was beheaded at Jerusalem by order of Herod. He was the first martyred disciple.
- Thomas, the doubter, was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel, in the East Indies.
- Philip was hanged against a pillar at Heropolis (Abyssinia).
- Thaddeus was shot to death with arrows.
- Simon died on a cross in Persia (now Iran).

Likely the name of the lady this epistle was written to was “Kyria” in Greek, which is similar to Martha in Hebrew. It could also be the feminine form of “Kurios” (Lord), the term applied to Christ. So this letter could also be said to have been written to the whole Church, the Body of Christ. But it is a more widely-held interpretation that this letter was written to a lady named Kyria.

John expresses his love for this lady through his love of Christ, and because anyone in Christ knows the truth. The only way to know the truth is to be born again, and then allow the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth.

*John 16:13 But when he, **the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.** He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

But we are taught to dig deep into the Word of God in order that the Holy Spirit can instruct us and guide us to maturity in Christ. You cannot grow to maturity in the Lord apart from the written Word. This is how the Holy Spirit instructs us, rebukes us, convicts us, and strengthens us. The reason we are to go on to maturity is so that we will be able to distinguish good from evil and not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

*Heb. 5:13-14 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. **But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.***

*Eph. 4:14 Then we will no longer be infants, **tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.***

So John was not only writing to Kyria, but also to all those who know the truth. Those who are in Christ know the truth and that truth lives in them. They are sanctified—made more like Christ—and brought to ma-

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turity by the Word of truth.

*John 14:16-17 And I will ask the Father, and **he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*

*John 17:17 **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.***

But we don't just automatically become mature. We must submit to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to teach us through His Word. If we are not in the Word, we cannot be brought to maturity. We must obey the Lord, or else we prove that the Truth is not in us.

*1 John 2:3 We know that we have come to know him if **we obey his commands.***

**3 Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.**

God's grace, mercy, and peace are with those who are born again into the family of God through Jesus Christ.

*2 Cor. 9:8 And **God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.***

*Tit. 3:5 ...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but **because of his mercy.** He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...*

*John 14:27 **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.** I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

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

Great joy is to be found in obedient children who walk in the truth.

*Col. 3:20 **Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.***

*John 8:32 **Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."***

**5 And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.**

**6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.**

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We are commanded to walk in love and to obey Christ's commands. By the time this letter was written, the following command of Jesus Christ was well known among the believers.

John 13:34 ***"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."***

Again, I want to stress that we are also to obey His commands. If we do, we prove that we love Him. If we don't, we prove the opposite. John is one of my favorite writers because he is so straightforward with the truth and leaves no room for compromise.

John 15:10 ***If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.***

1 John 2:3 ***We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.***

1 John 3:24 ***Those who obey his commands live in him, and he is in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.***

1 John 5:3 ***This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,***

It is vitally important to love one another. We show our love for others through mercy, speaking the truth in love, compassion, and pulling them from the fire if they are going the wrong way. We show our love for the Lord by obeying His commands. One of those commands is to not be deceived by false prophets and heretics, but to get away from them. Let's do a quick study on this subject.

We are to test the spirits.

1 John 4:1 ***Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.***

We must discern false teachers and false prophets. They are distinguished by laying error alongside truth.

2 Pet. 2:1-2 ***But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.***

*"Error is never taught in an obvious way because it might be exposed and found*

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*out. But it is always dressed up in pretty clothes so that it looks good and attractive on the outside so that it can seem truer than truth itself.” (Irenaeus [translated to simplified English]).*

***Matt. 7:15 Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.***

We are to rebuke them.

***Tit. 1:9-13 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith...***

Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN), in raising funds at the end of 1999, told viewers that if they sent in a donation of \$2,000 they would be debt-free by the year 2000, and their whole household would be saved. They continue making false promises to raise money, and each year their tactics get even more bold and more disgusting. TBN, through the TV, is “ruining whole households...for the sake of dishonest gain.” People like Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, and many others have been rebuked repeatedly for their false doctrines and false prophecies, but they will not repent. They have no accountability. In fact, they turn around and curse those Christians who rebuke them. If they are unrepentant and do not follow the Word of God, the Bible says...

***Isa. 8:20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.***

If they are unrepentant, then we are to mark and avoid them.

***Rom. 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.***

The word “divisions” is from the word “hairetikos” which means “heretic” or “a divisive follower of false doctrines.” If they do not repent, we are to reject them as heretics after they have been admonished a couple of times.

***Tit. 3:10 A man that is an heretick after the first and sec-***

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***and admonition reject...***

We should have no fellowship with their works but expose them.

*Eph. 5:11* *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather **expose them.***

Paul warned the churches about certain heretics, as well as the prophets. We need to name names so that we can warn others about heretics specifically, just as they did. The reason is that general principles are not enough. We have to be specific about who is teaching false doctrines and making false prophecies. We must separate ourselves from them.

*2 Cor. 6:17* ***“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”***

God calls us to be a holy people, separated from the world, separated from the wolves and the goats. We are to be unleavened bread.

*“Neither when we have chosen our way can we keep company with those who go the other way. There must come with the decision for truth a corresponding protest against error” (Charles Haddon Spurgeon).*

We must keep away from them.

*2 Thess. 3:6* *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to **keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.***

*2 Thess. 3:14-15* ***If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.***

If they do not heed the warnings as a brother, then we are to turn away from them.

*2 Tim. 3:5* ***Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.***

***7 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.***

One of the marks of a deceiver and antichrist is a person who denies the Hypostatic Union. Jesus Christ is 100% God and 100% man for all eternity since His incarnation. He is the eternal God/man. Before His birth, He existed from eternity past as God—the second Person. Does Jesus Christ possess all the attributes of God from eternity past to eternity future? Yes.

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1. He possesses all of them: John 1:1; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; Heb. 1:3
2. He is self-existent: John 5:26
3. He is unchangeable: Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8
4. He is eternal: John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5; Colossians 1:17; Heb. 1:2
5. He is omnipresent: Matt. 18:20; 28:20; John 3:13; Ephesians 1:23; 4:10; Colossians 3:11
6. He is omniscient: John 16:30; 21:17; cf. 2:23-24
7. He is incomprehensible: Matt. 11:25-27

When the Father sent the Son to be born as a human, Jesus Christ added human nature on to His divine nature. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have to believe that: (1) He is the Christ (Mashiach)—God—and that (2) He came in the flesh. The Messiah of God is YHWH Himself. If you simply believe that Jesus Christ was only a spirit, or was only human, or was an anointed man, or at any point was less than fully God and fully man, then you are a deceiver and antichrist. This is exactly what Word-Faith teachers assert. They teach that Jesus Christ was only a man when he was born, and at His baptism He was then anointed by the Holy Spirit just like any other Christian who receives the Holy Spirit. This is how they get to their other false theological positions. You see, if Jesus Christ was only an anointed man, then we can do all the miracles He did and, in fact, we can be exactly like Him. Kenneth Copeland said that he, Copeland, could have died for our sins. They teach that men can be as God, that Christians are, in fact, little gods—little messiahs. This is what they have all taught at one time or another. We have recordings of many Word of Faith teachers on video teaching these things. When men teach anything that degrades the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union, they are deceivers, in fact, they are antichrist and have the spirit of antichrist. This is one of the ways you can discern a deceiver. Let me give you a few more.

We must: (1) Test the spirits by testing what a person teaches and does—their doctrines. We must also (2) test their prophecies for accuracy and an accurate biblical basis, and (3) we must test them for the fruit of the Spirit. If they teach or do things against the core doctrines of the Faith, they are heretics. Five of the most basic core doctrines of the Faith that we must not abandon are as follows:

1. **The Trinity:** God is one “What” and three “Whos” with each “Who” possessing all the attributes of Deity and personality. To put it another way: God is One God eternally existing in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. **The Person of Jesus Christ:** Jesus is 100% God and 100% man for all eternity.

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3. **The Second Coming:** Jesus Christ is coming bodily to earth to rule and judge.
4. **Salvation:** It is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.
5. **The Scripture:** It is entirely inerrant and sufficient for all Christian life.

We must also test their prophecies if they are making them. Contrary to popular teaching in the Third Wave/New Apostolic Reformation, a prophet must be 100% accurate according to Deuteronomy 18:22. If a prophet does not repent of false prophecy, we are to reject them as liars and heretics according to Titus 3:10. We are to admonish anyone who teaches false teachings or makes false prophecies once or twice. If they do not repent, we are to reject them as not part of the body of Christ.

Many deceivers went out in John's time, but there are exponentially more today. This is the most deceptive time in all the history of the Church. We literally have thousands of heretics out there IN THE CHURCH today, and millions of cult followers who follow after false teachers. All you need to do to understand this is to tune into TBN.

***8 Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.***

You mean a person can lose what they worked for in Christ? Yes, both spiritually and in terms of rewards. You can throw away the good works that you have done in the Lord and, thus, the rewards, by allowing yourself to be deceived by heretics. Saul did some good works as the anointed King of Israel, but then he blew it all in the end through a life of unrepentant sin. Solomon even wrote Scripture, but at the end of his life, because of his 700 wives and 300 mistresses, he was pulled away from a pure devotion to God and worshipped idols. There are many more examples. Just because a person has done good work in the past does not mean their reward is guaranteed. But loss of rewards is not the only possible loss. There is loss that is far more serious. They can even wander so far away from the Faith so as to shipwreck their faith and end up destroyed.

*1 Tim. 1:18-19 Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may **fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.***

*1 Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. **Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.***



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*Heb. 10:39* ***But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed.*** *but of those who believe and are saved.*

We can shipwreck our faith, we can wander away, we can shrink back and be destroyed. Yes, Paul was confident that he who began a good work in the Philippians would carry it on to completion in Jesus Christ. But Paul's confidence for the Philippians must also be balanced with the fact that we have free will and can choose to disobey the Lord, wander away, change our belief system, ignore the conviction of the Holy Spirit, stiffen our necks, live in rebellion, and end up believing in vain (1 Cor. 15:2).

So we must always be alert, watching out for heresy. Are we heresy hunters? I don't like that term because it implies that I am looking for any excuse to reject people. I am not looking for every opportunity, however, I am being alert to heresy and when I see it, I confront it, and reject it, if need be. So in that sense, I am a heresy hunter—all Christians are commanded to be heresy hunters.

***9 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.***

This is a crucial verse. Here is the **additional** criteria for testing who is in Christ and who is not. John gives us two criteria: (1) People who “run ahead” or go beyond the teaching of the Apostles, and (2) those who do not continue in the teachings of Christ.

Other translations use other words for “run ahead.” In the KJV, it says “transgresses.” In the NASB, it says “goes too far.” In the ASV, it says “goes onward.” In the Phillips, it says:

*The man who is so “advanced” that he is not content with what Christ taught, has in fact no God. The man who bases his life on Christ’s teaching, however, has both the Father and the Son.*

Paul told the Church not to go beyond what is written.

*1 Cor. 4:6* *Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.*

The whole reason we see the prideful boastful stuff on TBN and other so-called Christian TV networks is because the false teachers on many of those shows have “run ahead.” They have gone beyond what is written.

The second point is we have to “continue” to “abide” in Christ and His

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teachings. This is important. We don't just believe one day and then put our lives on cruise control. We must abide in the teachings of Christ.

***Heb. 4:12-14 For the word of God is living and active.***

*Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.***

The NASB adds "until the end" to this verse, which is in many of the original manuscripts. We must hold on, abide in Christ and the teachings of the Apostles, until the end.

***Heb. 3:14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly until the end the confidence we had at first.***

***2 Tim. 1:13 Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.***

***2 Thess. 2:15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.***

***1 Thess. 5:21 Test everything. Hold on to the good.***

***10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him.***

***11 Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.***

Now we come to the crux of this study and the warning of this letter that was obviously on John's mind. There are two things John tells Christians to do. We are not to: (1) Take heretics into our homes and (2) welcome them. We are not to allow false teachers in our houses, nor are we to give them a friendly greeting.

The Church consisted of house churches in the first century. There were not big fancy church buildings, mega churches, TV networks, radio programs, etc. The early Christians were warned by John not to allow heretics into their homes. This same thing is true for allowing influences from TBN into our homes through TV, videos, and audio. Turn that heretical network and any others like it off for good! Don't let them imprison your family.