

## 2 and 3 John

<b>A Pervasive Problem</b>	All of John's materials in the NT, when read together, give us a real sense of the pervasive problem of heresy in the latter part of the first century when he wrote his materials, Gnosticism in particular. The Gnostics, to review, taught that Jesus couldn't have come in the flesh because the flesh was evil, only the spirit of a person was considered good. John addresses the issue in all but 3 John: (1) Gospel – "the word became flesh" (2) 1 John – "that which we have seen and heard" (3) 2 John – "deceiver who don't acknowledge as coming in the flesh...are the antichrist" (4) Revelation – "if anyone adds to or subtracts from this."
<b>Why This is Important</b>	John is known as the "evangelist" for a reason. All of his materials teach us the importance of contending for the faith in the midst of not only a world culture that is dark, but also a church culture that tends to go with it. In that sense, 2 John is similar in thematic content to 1 John. In both, John is concerned with light being manifested in confessing that Jesus came in the flesh and darkness being manifested in confessing he did not.
<b>Introducing 2 John</b>	In 2 John, the Evangelist teaches us that one of Satan's greatest weapons is deceit. As a result, it's easy to be "deceived" into a presentation of Christianity that is packaged well and sounds attractive. This presentation of Christianity, though, isn't Christianity at all. It's a departure from the word of God.
<b>Why Write 2 John When 1 John is Similar?</b>	These heretics were taking over churches and teaching people in churches not to welcome orthodox confessing people like John (who had been with Jesus!). John tells his audience, "You've got this backwards. If you act in this way, you share in their wicked work."
<b>A Unique Feature of 2 John</b>	The early church was so persecuted in the latter part of the 1 <sup>st</sup> century, that their letters often featured coded language to protect the traveling couriers. John does this in 2 John: "to the lady chosen by God and her children." That's a way of saying: "to the church and the people who make it up."
<b>Introducing 3 John</b>	3 John is an entirely personal letter to an elder named "Gaius." In that sense, it is more like Paul's letters written to a specific audience than the rest of the General Epistles. In 3 John, the Evangelist stresses the importance of showing hospitality. He does this by comparing 2 people: Diotrephes (who was bad news) and Demetrius.
<b>Key Verses</b>	"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" (2 Jn 6).  "Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God" (3 Jn 12)
<b>Outline</b>	Both 1 and 2 John are single chapter books. They are good examples how ancient letters were written: They have (a) a salutation; (b) an encouragement (most of the time); (c) the major purpose for writing section; and then a (d) benediction.

## 2 John

### 1. The Salutation (1-3)

*The elder: To the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth—<sup>2</sup> because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: <sup>3</sup> Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.*

- The coded introduction let John's readers know the (a) author (the elder: John); (b) audience (lady chosen = church// to her children = people). This code lets us know what comes forward is content that can get a lot of people killed in the ancient world.

### 2. The Encouragement (4-6)

*<sup>4</sup> It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.*

- Notice the similarity of the language to the Gospel of John and 1 John: "command" / "from the beginning" / "love one another." John is an elder and evangelist. But this language is why we call him "the Beloved."

### 3. The Major Purposes for Writing (7-11)

*<sup>7</sup> I say this because 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. <sup>8</sup> Watch out that you do not lose what we<sup>[a]</sup> have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. <sup>11</sup> Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.*

- A Lesson about Deceivers and Antichrist(s) (7): (1) Deceivers are anti-Christ(s), like the one coming in the future.
- A Lesson about Why Perseverance in the Faith is Important (8-9): Demonstrates proof of relationship with God.
- A Lesson about Participating in Evil (10-11): You don't have to orchestrate it to be a part of it.

### 4. The Benediction (12-13)

*<sup>12</sup> I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. <sup>13</sup> The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings.*

## 3 John

### 1. The Salutation (1)

*<sup>1</sup> The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.*

### 2. The Encouragement (2-6)

*<sup>2</sup> Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. <sup>3</sup> It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. <sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. <sup>5</sup> Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. <sup>6</sup> They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God.*

- Important here is the genuineness of the encouragement John, advanced in age, gives to his dear friend and co-laborer in the gospel who was also advanced in age.
- Also important is the identifiable style of John: "it gave me great joy" // "I have no greater joy." It's much like 1-2 John and his Gospel especially: "no greater love has any man than this..."

### 3. The Major Purposes for Writing (7-12)

*<sup>7</sup> It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. <sup>8</sup> We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth. <sup>9</sup> I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. <sup>10</sup> So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. <sup>11</sup> Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. <sup>12</sup> Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.*

- A Lesson about Hospitality, Especially to Those Who Labor in the Gospel (7-8)
- A Lesson About What a Self-Serving and Inhospitable Person Acts Like and How to Deal with Them (9-11)
- A Lesson About What a Servant and Hospitable Person Acts Like and How God Sees Them (12)

### 4. The Benediction (13-15)

*<sup>13</sup> I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. <sup>14</sup> I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. <sup>15</sup> Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.*