



# 2 & 3 John

A SUMMER SERIES ON THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

2 John 1-13    3 John 1-14    John 13:34-35

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The Apostle John wrote five of the 27 New Testament books; and these inspired books of the Bible appear to be written in a flurry at the end of his life.

Early church writers tell us that John got caught up in Christian persecution at the end of the first century. By God's grace, he was exiled to an island called Patmos rather than executed; and it was while he was on this island of Patmos he was given the vision of what we know today as the *Book of Revelation*.

During his time on the island, the Roman Emperor was assassinated, and the new Emperor released John from exile. John returned to the Ephesus area in Asia Minor (which is modern day Turkey), and he found that false teachers had infiltrated his Churches while he was in exile. So John writes to his Churches the letters (= *epistles*) that we know today as *1, 2, and 3 John* to warn them about the danger.

By this time John was an old man, the only surviving Apostle. One of his last Apostolic acts was to write the *Gospel of John* as the last inspired book of the Bible. He wrote *in order that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him we will have life in His Name* (John 20:31).

Throughout the summer, we have studied some of the themes of *1 John*. Today we want to take a look at the letters (*epistles*) of *2 and 3 John*. The book of *2 John* is only 13 verses long, and it appears to be the *cover letter* that John sent with *1 John*. In addition, when he sent *1 John* with its cover letter of *2 John*, he also included a *personal letter* to a pastor named Gaius; this personal letter is 14 verses long and we know it today as *3 John*.

All of these books, **1, 2, and 3 John**, would have been received by the Churches as **authoritative**; and they would have been the subject of the “Sunday sermons” and the “Bible classes” in the congregations.

Today we'll take a look at three themes from the books of **2 & 3 John**<sup>1</sup>. Two of these themes work well to summarize the two major themes of **1 John**.

The most important theme in all of John's books is that of **Christology**; John is writing in order that you have a right understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done.

I say this because many **imposters**, 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**. Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 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. 2 John 7-9

The most important theme in all five of John's books is that of **Christology**; that you have a right understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done.

The false teachers claim that Jesus was neither the long awaited Old Testament Messiah, the Christ; nor is He the Son of God. They taught that His death on the cross has no salvation value. The false teachers warped and denied both *who Jesus is* and *what He has done*<sup>2</sup>. The false teaches are **impostors, deceivers, and antichrists**; they do not have God nor do they know God.

The ~~true~~ teaching is that Jesus is the Christ, the long awaited Messiah of the Old Testament, who is the Son of God and the Savior of the world; His death takes away the sins of the world and His resurrection give eternal life!

The storyline of the Old Testament is that God promised to send a Savior; the Messiah would be anointed with the Holy Spirit to do the work of salvation for all

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<sup>1</sup> There seems to be four major themes in these two books; the one that we will not study today is in 3 John, where John discusses with Gaius his plan to confront a renegade leader named Diotrephes. John wrote: “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. (3 John 9-10).” That would have been some meeting between Diotrephes and the Apostolic “Son of Thunder!” (Mark 3:17).

<sup>2</sup> Remember that **Christology** is easily thought of in two areas: the Person of Christ (Who He is) and the Work of Christ (what He has done as the Savior of the World).

people. Jesus is the Son of God; He is the Messiah, the *Christ*<sup>3</sup>; He was born in Bethlehem and given a human nature. The Son of God is incarnate, *in flesh*, at His conception and birth. He is both true Man and true God; He is One Person named Jesus; but He has both a divine nature and a human nature. He is both conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

Christ Jesus, the Son of God, has done the work of salvation for us with His life and His death. At every moment of His life, He lived a perfect and holy life according to the commandments and will of God; And then He dies a sacrificial death in our place and for our sins<sup>4</sup>. In Him your sins are forgiven; you are declared righteous and holy in God's eyes. Salvation is by Christ alone, through faith alone, because of God's grace alone.

For the Apostle John, this is the **most important thing**. *Understanding and believing the truth about Jesus is everything!* You could say that all of John's writings are written *in order that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him you will have life in His Name (John 20:31)*.

A second theme in these two books of **2 & 3 John** is that of *love for your neighbor*. God has loved us in His Son Jesus, and in response we love one another.

And I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. 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 John 5-6

For the Apostle John, *loving your neighbor* is the most important sign of faith. We love others, because God has first loved us in His Son Jesus Christ. In faith, and as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, we can love others with a self-sacrificing kind of love. You can be patient and kind with other people. You can obey His commandments when it comes to your interactions with other people. Jesus said, *“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* (John 13:35)”

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<sup>3</sup> Messiah (Hebrew word) and Christ (Greek word) both mean “anointed” and refer to Jesus as the long promised ‘anointed One’ in the Old Testament. Jesus’ Baptism visually shows what this anointing means: the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and rested on Jesus. Jesus is “anointed” by the Spirit to be the Savior of the world.

<sup>4</sup> This is a brief summary of the doctrine called the “Active and Passive Obedience of Christ.” Christ actively obeyed God the Father’s Word and Will by living a holy life FOR US according to the 10 Commandments; and he passively obeyed God the Father’s will by letting the Jews and Romans crucify Him FOR US on a cross to earn our salvation.

These two themes -- accurate **Christology** and **loving one another** are the two major themes woven throughout John's epistles.

There is another theme in **3 John** that I want to show you also.

[Gaius}, **you are faithful** in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that **we may be fellow workers for the truth.** 3 John 5-8

Gaius had been helping missionaries that John was sending to him. He had welcomed them, took care of them, supported them, and sent them on their way well equipped for their work. John tells Gaius that he is *a fellow worker for the Truth*<sup>5</sup>.

**And so are you.**

This congregation is generous in its support of the work of the Gospel. You are faithful in giving your tithes and offerings here at Trinity. You have a warm love and a kind encouragement for us as church workers and the work we do together here at Trinity. Your faithfulness and generosity makes you *a fellow worker in the truth* of the gospel! Your faithful giving and loving encouragement means that you share in the work of the Gospel ... like Gaius in John's day. On behalf of all the church workers in this congregation, I want to say thank you for your support. It is a joy for us to serve here, and we rejoice that you are *fellow workers in the truth* with us.

**1,2, and 3 John** give us a glimpse into the early church and the work of an Apostle. John was concerned about his churches; he defended the truth of God's Holy Word and warned the people of God of the danger from false teachers. In these epistles, John teaches that the Christian faith comes down to two key things:

*accurate* **Christology**  
*and loving one another*

May you learn, study, and understand **Biblical Christology**; and may you always *love your neighbor* as Christ has loved you. Amen!

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<sup>5</sup> The Christian who helps to support [church workers] in their efforts thus becomes a co-worker in cooperation with the truth. ... the Christian who supports them becomes a co-worker with the Spirit of God Himself. 1, 2, 3  
John Comfort And Counsel For A Church In Crisis, Dr. W. Hall Harris III, Bible.org

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Lord Jesus,  
we thank you for the Apostle John and his  
writings in Holy Scripture.

Help us to take them to heart and to learn  
from him.

Help us to hold fast to the truth about You,  
the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of  
the world.

Defend us from the false teachers, and ever  
deepen our faith and conviction in Who You  
are and what You have done for us.

Please send us the Holy Spirit so that we  
may live holy and godly lives loving our  
neighbor as You have loved us.

We pray this in Your Name, by the power of  
the Holy Spirit, and for the glory of God the  
Father,

Amen

## 2 John 1-13

1 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— 2 because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: 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. 4 It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. 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. 7 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. 8 Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 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. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. 11 Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work. 12 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. 13 The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings.

### 3 John 1-14

The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 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. 3 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. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth. 9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. 10 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. 11 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. 12 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. 13 I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. 14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

## **John 13:34-35**

[Jesus said,] “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”