

# Note

## 2 & 3 John – Part 1 of 1

### Summary

2 and 3 John were letters addressed to individuals. 2 John was to a lady elder and like 1 John, the letter warns against false teachers. Although Christians are characterized by the love which they show others, John warns the elder not to share in their evil deeds by offering her hospitality to these false teachers. 3 John is written for a man named Gaius. The letter is also centered on hospitality but here John encourages Gaius to extend hospitality for travelling missionaries who speaks the truth. These letters shows us that fruitful actions are direct representation of our truthful walk with God.

# Transcript

## 2 & 3 John – Part 1 of 1

Today, we look at 2 John and 3 John. 1 John was basically a circular letter written by the aged, Apostle John. He was supervising a group of churches in the Ephesus region, and there was a crisis. A group had split off because they did not believe that Jesus Christ was 100% God, 100% man. They couldn't accept that. Not only did they leave, but they were also causing problems to those who were left behind in the church.

So 1 John was written by the Apostle John, to help these people in the various churches, a network of churches to get straight on this doctrine. And now he writes two other letters at the same time to be given out. This time they were not circular letters to the churches, but 2 John and 3 John are letters written to particular individuals. Now, these were the only letters written to particular individuals. Timothy and Titus were written to them as pastors of churches. But these were written to two individuals regarding their behavior, not how they managed a church. So these are the only two letters written to individuals in the Bible, written at the same time.

2 John was written to a lady with no name; 3 John was written to a man who is named. And both of them with regard to the topic of travelling teachers. Now at this stage of the church, this is quite a while, maybe like 60 years after the resurrection of Christ. Christians were going around teaching the churches that have sprouted out all over the Roman Empire. These were travelling teachers. Some were good, but some were really bad; and some did it for money as a way of earning a living.

In 2 John, addressed to this lady, he told her to be careful who she welcomed. And then in 3 John, the opposite - be more open to welcoming good people. So we see two opposites, a lady who was accepting any travelling teacher, anyone that passed by. You see in those days Christians were a persecuted minority, so they really had nowhere to stay. There were no church buildings; they only had house churches. It was not good to stay at the inns because they were brothels. And many of these teachers didn't

even have enough money. So these were two letters written for this particular topic of how do you deal with these travelling teachers.

2 John

verses 1 to 2:

The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

Name of this lady - unknown. John calls himself the elder, not a big apostle, just the elder, and he tells the lady, I love you in truth. That's a beautiful balance - truth and love. Truth can be very harsh, love can be very wishy-washy. So you always need this balance. It's like the holiness of God and the mercy of God, always in perfect balance.

Verse 3:

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

You see that repeated again.

Verse 4: I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.

Today's Christianity is knowing the truth. We were commanded not only to know the truth, but to walk in the truth.

1 John is about love. Walk in the light. What is the light? The love of God. Walking in the light is walking in the love of God, having agape love, blessing the world with agape love. Walking in darkness is grabbing, stealing, cheating. Light is always good. You're able to open up and show what you're doing. When you cheat, when we lie, when we abuse people, we do it in the dark. So 1 John is light and love.

verse 5: And now I ask you, dear lady – not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning – that we love one another. (this is 1 John)

verse 6: And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

What's the commandment? Love God with all your heart, and neighbour, and yourself.

Verse 7: For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh.

So you see the same problem-they couldn't accept God and man in one person, that Jesus is not 100% God and 100% man. Verse 7 says for many deceivers have gone out.

Continue verse 7: Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.

So the one who denies Christ is coming in the flesh.

verse 8: Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win have a full reward.

verse 9: Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. verse 10: If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

So basically, John is telling this lady, if anyone doesn't bring this teaching that Jesus Christ is 100% God, 100% man, then do not receive Him into your house or give him any greeting. For whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works. Now for this lady, it must be so difficult. She's so kind-hearted, she welcomes everybody, and then suddenly, the Apostle of love, John says, Don't let him stay in your house, don't even greet him. Can you imagine? For this lady it is unthinkable.

You see, this letter was written to many Christians today, not only to this lady. For many Christians, as long as a man says I'm a pastor, as long as he looks like a pastor, his title is a reverend, we receive and support him. And this is so common today. That's why today, there are wicked people flourishing because Christians do not reject wicked men in sheep's clothing. John said if he doesn't teach true doctrines, the true Gospel that Jesus is 100% God, 100% man who went on the cross, then don't receive him. If Jesus is not 100% God, 100% man, He cannot die for our sins.

Number 2, if He is a man, how would he even know how many sins we have? How could one man take all our sins? How can one man's life be a

substitute for the whole world, unless He is God-man. Now if you don't believe that, then I have nothing to do with you. If someone preaches the gospel and says you need works to be saved, that means Jesus' work on the cross was not sufficient. Reject him. If someone preaches that Jesus died so that you have a license to go and have more sex and more greed. No! That is not the Jesus that we preach. Jesus died to save us from hell and to bring us to Christ-likeness, not to more immorality.

He died and we received the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ in us. Anyone who doesn't preach this, have nothing to do with Him. So I hope you see in 2 John, it is for us to make this very difficult decision. Sometimes this pastor has been so good to you, but you know his doctrine is wrong. John says have nothing to do with him if he does not teach the true doctrine of salvation.

Verse 12: Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

Now, we move on 3 John. 2 John was written to a lady, 3 John was to a guy, exact opposite situation.

3 John

verse 1: The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

Very similar, probably written at the same time.

verses 2: Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.

verse 3: For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth.

verse 4: I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

I like this, I wish I could see my church members walking in the truth, not just believing in the truth. What is the truth? Truth is you have Christ in you, Christ will live His life through you. What is Christ's life? Loving others, agape love.

Verses 5 to 8:

verse 5: Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are,

verse 6: who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.

verse 7: For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.

verse 8: Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

So John is praising Gaius for his support for all these travelling teachers who go around with no support from anywhere else, and so he is a fellow worker with them by supporting them.

Verses 9: I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

verse 10: So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

But there was one guy in this church called Diotrephes, who seemed to want to control and want the pre-eminence in the church. He didn't want anyone else to come in, he would not welcome them. He will not allow people at church to welcome them and if they did he would put them out of the church. So he is a guy who wants no outside body to come and help in the church.

Verses 11: Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

verse 12: Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

So John goes on to add Demetrius is a good guy, a good teacher. Why is Diotrephes not allowing anyone to welcome him, house him, and invite him to teach in the church? So here we see the exact opposite of the lady in 2 John, who welcomed anybody who sounded like a pastor or a teacher.

You see, these two letters actually reflect the two types of churches we have. Now 2,000 years later, there are those churches that accept anybody as long as they say they are a Christian, and all kinds of doctrines are coming in. And the whole church has no clarity of what the Gospel is. And

the Gospel has become some social gospel - do good. You ask the average church member, What is the Gospel? And they will tell you some convoluted thing, because they have no clarity at all due to all kinds of teachings coming in.

And in the midst of all these teachings, the true simple Gospel is lost - that Christ died for our sins, past, present, future, rose from the dead, and whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Then the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and we will be born again into a new life of love for the brethren. That's the Gospel.

Christ died for us, we received Christ in our heart, Christ now lives through us. Simple. But there is another group of churches that exist today that have just one hero. Everybody else is not good enough, every other church has some problem, every other preacher has some problem, except him.

So what is the lesson of this?

The lesson is, God is love.

Welcome and help those who need help, like travelling pastors.

God is love. But God is also holy, be careful who you welcome. Don't welcome those who come to shame God's name and to destroy God's work.

So we have a God of balance - perfect holiness, perfect love. That's what we should be too. Have this balance, not like the lady or like Gaius - all sentimental love which accepts everybody, or so strict that nobody is welcomed.

May God grant us this simple balance. The end of the Bible is so practical. But when people don't read these little letters, they have churches like this.

May God bless you! May you know the wonderful, all-holy, all-loving God.

God bless!