

BOOK OF 2 JOHN & BOOK OF 3 JOHN

1. After the epistle of 1 John (which was a circular letter to the churches in Ephesus to warn them of a heresy group, who not only left the church, but caused trouble to those in other churches), Apostle John wrote another 2 epistles (namely 2 John and 3 John) at the same time to two individuals.
2. While Paul wrote the letters of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus to individual pastors of various churches, these two epistles (letters) of 2 John and 3 John were not written to pastors, to tell them about how they ought to manage the church. They were information about the behaviours of two individuals. There are only two such letters in the Bible.
3. The epistle of 2 John was written to an unnamed woman and 3 John was written to a man. Both letters were regarding travelling teachers. These letters were written about 60 years after the resurrection of Christ when Christians were travelling about to teach other churches. However some were bad teachers and pedlars of the word.
4. The book of 2 John was written to warn the unnamed woman who she should or should not welcome.
5. The book of 3 John was to ask the man to be more open to travelling teachers.
6. The woman in the book of 2 John was opening the church to all kinds of travelling teachers which was the exact opposite of the man in the book of 3 John who refused to receive any such travelling teacher. Travelling teachers needed to be housed because there were no church buildings at that time to accommodate them. Churches during that time were all house churches only. These travelling teachers were poor and could not afford commercial accommodation like hotels.

BOOK OF 2 JOHN

1. Verse 1. John the Apostle called himself “The Elder” and addressed the letter to an unnamed elect woman whom he loved in truth as a sister-in-Christ. There is a good balance here because while love is wishy washy, truth can be very harsh. This balance is like the holiness of God versus the mercies of God.
2. Verse 3. The phrase “in truth and love” was repeated here again by John to emphasise that his letter was written in love despite it being a warning letter.
3. Verse 4. The phrase “in truth” means to walk in truth and not just knowing the truth. Walk in love and walk in the light. Your lifestyle should not be grabbing but giving.
4. Verse 5. It is not a new commandment but the same “Love one another” commandment that Jesus gave long ago.
5. Verse 6. The same commandment was given from the beginning. Also see Mark 12:30-31.
6. Verse 7. The same warning was given in the book of 1 John about deceivers who could not accept the fact that Jesus is 100% Man and 100% God. Those people were “coming in the flesh” and they were deceivers and antichrists.
7. Verses 8-10.

- a) John warned the woman not to receive those deceivers who did not teach that Jesus is 100% God and 100% Man. He said, "Do not receive or even greet them". By receiving them, it was sharing in their evil deeds. That woman was told by Apostle John, who always preached love, to turn such deceivers away.
- b) Many Christians today find it difficult to turn false teachers away and simply claim, "Who are we to judge?" We Christians must judge whether a preacher is preaching the true Gospel.
- c) If Jesus is not 100% Man and 100% God, His act on the Cross is ineffective because:
 - i. If Jesus is not Man and only God, He cannot die.
 - ii. If Jesus is only Man and not God, how can He know how many sins we have committed and how can one man take away all our sins?
- d) If anyone claims that there is a need to add works to the Cross, then he is claiming that Jesus' work on the Cross is insufficient or unfinished.

BOOK OF 3 JOHN

1. This letter is written to a man named Gaius.
2. Verse 3. Gaius walked in the truth. He was not just believing in the truth. Christ lived His life through Gaius in the form of agape love expression.
3. Verse 8. John reminded that we must support travellers like what Gaius did.
4. Verses 9-10. However, there was a man called Diotrephes who refused to welcome these travellers. He was controlling the church and disallowing church members to receive them as well; and if they did so, he would throw them out of the church. This man, Diotrephes, was the exact opposite of the lady in the book of 2 John.
5. Verses 11-12. We must imitate the good and not the evildoers. We should welcome and house people who are like Demetrius so that they can continue teaching or serving God.

There are two types of churches in modern days:

- a) Some allow all kinds of preachers which caused the true Gospel to be lost. They generalise it to just do good with a convoluted gospel.
- b) Some just have one preacher and he is the hero who claims that everyone else has an issue in preaching.

What are key lessons learnt from the Books of 2 John and 3 John?

1. God is love, we should therefore welcome and help reach out to travelling pastors and preachers.
2. God is holy, thus we should not welcome false preachers who shame the name of God.
3. There is perfect love and holiness, and hence there should be a balance in how we live our lives. It should not be like the sentimental love of the woman in the book of 2 John or be too strict like the man, Diotrephes, in the book of 3 John.
4. These are practical lessons as the Bible is coming to an end.