

First John (and 2 John, 3 John)

Page 401 in printed "Framework" book.

Page 395 in online .pdf www.generationword.com/Framework_text.pdf

Second John and Third John Introduction

Purpose: warn readers about certain traveling teachers who were deceivers and false.

Not only were the readers not to follow these false teachers, they were not to welcome them.

Welcoming these false teachers would be the equivalent of sharing in their wicked work.

Then, the readers are told to love each other.

It is possible that the reason 2 and 3 John were preserved in the text of Scripture is that they were part of a package of documents from John that were sent together at the same time. In this senerio:

1. 3 John is a recommendation letter TO GAIUS commending DEMETRIUS THE CARRIER of the package of letters FROM JOHN.
2. 2 John would have been a letter READ ALOUD TO GAIUS and his CHURCH.
3. 1 John would have been a written sermon, not a letter, sent from John to exhort the church of Gaius and other local churches.

FIRST JOHN	85 AD
<i>"This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." 5:4</i>	
Author: John Written From: Ephesus Sent To: A circular letter sent to the churches and their leaders in Asia	
Purpose: Combat false teaching and assure believers of their salvation in Christ. False teachers were denying the humanity of Christ and teaching that sinful practices did not affect fellowship with God. John writes for five reasons: 1. Promote true fellowship (1:3) 2. Fulfill his ministry and have full joy (1:4) 3. Promote holiness (1:6-2:2) 4. Combat false teaching (2:18-27) 5. Provide assurance of salvation for believers (5:13)	
Theme: Fellowship with God through Jesus Christ who is the light (revelation) and life (power of godliness).	
Basic Outline: • 1:1 – 2:2, Sound Doctrine: Incarnation of Jesus and Biblical view of Sin • 2:3 – 17, Obedience and love that is consistent with fellowship with God • 2:18 – 27, Doctrinal Test for true fellowship • 2:28 – 3:24, Holiness Test for true fellowship • 4:1 – 6, Test for false teachers and doctrines of demons • 4:7 – 21, Characteristics of fellowship with God through Jesus Christ • 5:1 – 5, Victory of fellowship with God through Jesus Christ • 5:6 – 12, Christology: Credentials of Jesus Christ • 5:13 – 21, Three assurances of fellowship with God through Jesus Christ: assurance of salvation (5:13), assurance of answered prayer (5:14-17), assurance of victory over sin (5:18-21)	

Memorable Verses:**Purpose of Letter:**

- Promote Fellowship: "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us." 1:3
- Fulfill Ministry and so have full joy: "We write this to make our joy complete." 1:4
- Promote Holiness: "I write this to you so that you will not sin." 2:1
- Provide Assurance of Salvation: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." 5:13
- Expose False Teachers: "I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray." 2:26

Problem of False Teachers:

- "Even now many antichrists have come." 2:18
- "Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son." 2:22
- "Do not let anyone lead you astray." 3:7
- "Do not believe the spirits, but test the spirits." 4:1

Other Verses:

- "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life." 1:1
- "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." 1:8
- "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1:9
- We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 2:3,4
- "Do not love the world or anything in the world." 2:15
- "Now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 3:2
- "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us." 3:16
- "If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God." 4:15
- "Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." 5:4
- "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." 5:12
- "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." 5:14

Greek Words:

- ἁμαρτία – *hamartia* – to miss the mark, sin, 1:7,8,9; 2:2,12; 3:4,5,8,9; 4:10; 5:16,17
- ἵλασμος – *hilasmos* – propitiation, 2:2; 4:10.
- γινώσκω – *ginosko* – know, perceive, be resolved, understand, be sure, 2:3,4,5,13,14,18,29; 3:1,6,16,19,20,24; 4:2,6,7,8,13,16; 5:2,20.
- ὁμολογέω – *homologeō* – confess, confession. This word comes from ὅμου *homou* “together” or “the same” and λόγος *logos* “speak, to say”. ὁμολογέω *homologeō* then means “to speak together” or “to say the same thing”, 1:9; 4:2, 3, 15.
- κόσμος – *kosmos* – world, system, order, ornament, arrangement. We get our word “cosmetics” from this Greek word. In the New Testament the *kosmos* or *cosmos* is an ordered system that functions separately from God and against God, 2:2,15,16,17; 3:1,13,17; 4:1,3,4,5,9,14,17; 5:4,5,19.
- νίκη – *nikē* – victory, 5:4.

Healthy Doctrine:

- Incarnation and humanity of Jesus Christ
- Sin Nature – Sin (1:8) and Sins (1:9)
- Assurance of Salvation
- Fellowship
- Propitiation (2:2; 4:10)

True spirituality is based on faith in the true doctrine concerning Jesus, obedience to the true commands of Jesus and love for God and believers. When believers walk in fellowship with God as described above they will experience joy, holiness and assurance of their salvation.

True Spirituality

• Faith in true doctrine • Obedience to true commands • Love for God and man	→ ... produces ...	• Joy (1:4) • Holiness (2:1) • Assurance of Salvation (5:13)
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Heretical Doctrines Confronted by John

- Denial of the person of Christ (1:1-4; 2:22).
- A form of antinomianism (1:6; 2:15-16; 3:4-6). (See The Healthy Doctrine Glossary)
- Knowledge of God and godly character are seen as separate issues (2:4).
- The doctrine that perfection or ultimate sanctification is attainable (1:8, 10).
- There are new “revelations” and new “commands” coming from God (2:7).
- Teachers had been sent by John either from Ephesus or, in earlier years, from Jerusalem. They had not maintained correct doctrine, which indicates they never really embraced it nor understood it even while with John. They had become false teachers (2:19).
- Claims to anointings and positions of authority that were counterfeit (2:27).
- Desire to live “as children of God” today in “glory” and “victory” in the world instead of recognizing that these eschatological events will occur at Christ’s return (3:2).
- Rejection of the hope of the future for satisfaction today (3:2).
- Living like the world today instead of purifying oneself from the world today (3:3).
- Rejection of the apostolic authority of the disciples (4:5, 6). Seen today in the denial of the apostolic gift in the early church and the denial of the written Scriptures.
- Salvation through some means other than Jesus (5:12-13).

Light, Love, Life

God is light	1:5
God is love	4:8,16
God is life	1:1-2; 5:11-13

First John Introduction

Author: Apostle John, son of Zebedee and brother of James

- Church history never suggested anyone other than John wrote 1 John.
- Overwhelming evidence credits John with writing 2 and 3 John, though at some point an unknown elder also named John was suggested.
- Claims to be an eyewitness of Christ in 1 John 1:1-3
- The author separates himself from the readers by using “I” and “you” language which shows apostolic authority, but at other times speaks of himself as a man on the same level as his readers using “we” to refer to their similar humanity.
- In 2 and 3 John the author is the “elder” which can easily be consider an apostolic reference.
- The similarities between the Gospel of John and First John are numerous including theology and vocabulary.
- The word *parakletos* is found in Scripture 5x, but are all only in John’s letters.
- The word *monogenes* which is used to identify the Son’s unique relationship with the Father is also only found in John’s letters: John 1:14, 18; John 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9
- Others:
 - “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” in 2 John 7 and 1 John 4:2
 - “deceiver” and “antichrist” in 2 John 7 and 1 John 2:22
 - “those who love and do good are “from God” in 3 John 11 and 1 John 3:10; 4:4, 7
- In early church history John was assumed to be the author, even by those who knew John and knew John’s disciples
 - Didache (90-120 AD) mentions 1 John 2:17 in Didache 10:5
 - Clement of Rome (96 AD) mentions 1 John 2:5 and 4:12, 17, 18 in 1 Clement 49:5 and 50:3
 - Epistle of Barnabas (130 AD) mentions 1 John 4:2 and 2 John 7 in 5:9-11 and 12:10
 - Polycarp (135 AD) mentions 1 John 2:22; 4:2-3 and 2 John 7 in his letter to the Philippians 7:1
 - Papias (born 60 AD and wrote 130 AD) knew John and makes reference to one of John’s letters and credits John the apostle as the author.
 - Irenaeus (wrote 180 AD) refers to both 1 and 2 John and credits John the apostle as the author.
 - Clement of Alexandria (180 AD) indicates that he knew of one letter of John’s and recognized John the apostle as the author.
- Papias does recognize the author of 2 and 3 John to be the “elder” (most likely indicating the apostle John. But Eusebius writing during the days of Constantine and desiring to reject the Millennial reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation used Papias’ reference to “elder” to discredit 2 and 3 John and Revelation.

Date and Location

- Not clear, but logically inferred to be around 85 AD (85-100 AD) from Ephesus to Asian churches (for example the seven churches of Revelation)
- This is based on the content of the letter, the issues addressed in the letters and early church history records.
- Church history provides strong evidence that John finished his years in Ephesus overseeing the churches of Asia.
- Irenaeus wrote (180 AD), “John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.” AND John was at Ephesus “remaining among them permanently until the time of Trajan.” (Trajan reigned the Roman Empire from 98-117 AD.)

- Most scholars believe the Gospel of John was written first, but at a very close time to the three letters.

Reason for Writing Letters

- First John is sent to a group of churches (likely a circular letter like Revelation) that had been infiltrated with false teaching by people who were trying to adjust the Christian Truth to match their culture and philosophy. (2:18-28 and 4:1-6 and 5:6-7)
- People (leaders, elders, pastors, speakers?) involved in the church(es) (Christians? Believers?) had accepted heretical doctrine concerning the person and work of Jesus (Christology and Soteriology). These “leaders” had left the church and started their own “church” or “organization”. (2:19)
- The leaving of these “leaders” upset the apostolic church in several ways:
 - Members of the church left to follow leaving behind people who wondered if maybe they should also follow to the new meeting place with the improved doctrine.
 - Those that left actually organized, trained and sent out teachers/preachers/evangelist/philosophers to promote their teaching among the believers and the Pagans. The goal was to convert not only individuals, but entire churches that John was overseeing. (2:26; 4:1-3; 2 John 7)
- John responded by writing First John (and likely sending it to several of the churches) to contest, refute and diffuse the false teachers influence on the true church.
 - Doctrinally the false teachers had attacked the person and work of Jesus.
 - John is extremely (but accurately) critical of teachers who did not confess
 - the man Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ (Messiah) (2:22)
 - the man Jesus, the Christ, had come in fullness of the flesh of man (4:2-3)
 - The false teachers were influenced by Greek philosophy and attempted to compromise the Christian truth. This is early Gnosticism in some form which accepted the Christian concepts with several adjustments which included Jesus was a spirit or a man whom the spirit of the Christ had come and left at his baptism and crucifixion.
 - This error would have drastically changed the work of atonement on the cross (2:2 and 4:10)
 - Morally
 - False teachers erred concerning the seriousness of sin (1:6-10)
 - Fellowship with God, they taught, could be maintained even while practicing sin (1:6). John contradicts this teaching with 2:3-6 and 5:3
 - Relationship
 - The false teachers did not have brotherly love (2:9-11). John insisted that love for other believers is a manifestation of genuine faith (3:14 and 4:7-21)
- John writes to reassure believers that they have the Truth. He provides them several tests for their assurance. There was confusion and doubt in the churches, but John writes to provide them a means of testing themselves and confirming their true faith. (5:13). The tests include:
 - 1 John 1:5-2:2
 - 1 John 2:3-11
 - 1 John 3:7-10, 14-15
 - 1 John 4:4-6, 7-8, 13-15
 - 1 John 5:13, 18-20

First John – Introduction (part two)

The truth of Christianity and the assurance of Christian faith are secured in two ways by John:

- 1) Objectively – the historical occurrence and the reality of Jesus' life where witnessed by the apostles and others (1 John 1:1-3)
- 2) Subjectively – the personal results of those who have believed the message of Truth. If a believer has these things they will know that Christianity is true and that they are true believers who can be assured of their salvation:
 - a. Truth – have the correct doctrine
 - b. Righteousness – have the correct behavior and lifestyle
 - c. Love

John is both condemning the false teachers and assuring the believers who are in the Truth.

The three areas of Christian error (or, new, improved or adjusted theology) that John's churches were facing (or, having to listen to, process and navigate through) included:

- 1) A new Christology – The Person and Work of Jesus was compromised
- 2) A new understanding of Sin (Hamartiology) – The seriousness of sin was minimized and fellowship with God was not interrupted by human sin.
- 3) A new level of super-spirituality – Spiritual superiority produced arrogance and loss of love
 - a. Secessionists – left apostolic church, started own evangelism/promotion, rejected believers who "stayed behind", etc.

John tells us why he wrote the letter:

1. 1:4, "We write this to make our joy complete."
2. 2:1 – "I write this to you so that you will not sin."
3. 2:26 – "I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray."
4. 5:13 – "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know you have eternal life."

John wrote evangelically to lead people to Christ in his Gospel:

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." – John 20:30-31

John wrote as an elder/pastor/teacher to keep/confirm people in Christ in 1 John:

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know you have eternal life." – 1 John 5:13

John addresses these areas of theology that have been distorted by the false teachers and those who followed them out of the church, and must be reaffirmed for the True believers that remained behind:

1. Theology - Doctrine of God –

- a. God is Light (1:5) – To walk in the light (Truth) is to walk in the life of God
- b. God is Love (4:8) – To live in love is to manifest the nature of God
- c. John contrasts God's light and love with Satan's:
 - i. Lies
 - ii. Hatred
 - iii. Evil
- d. God the Father is revealed in Jesus so that to love Jesus (the Son) is to love the Father:
 - i. 1:2-3 -
 - ii. 2:22-24 -
 - iii. 4:14 -
 - iv. 5:1 -
 - v. 2 John 9 –

2. Hamartiology – Doctrine of Sin –

- a. 3:8 – The devil is the source of sin
- b. 3:8 – The devil has been sinning since the beginning (Genesis 3, beginning of creation)
- c. John 8:44 –
- d. 1 John 3:12 –
- e. 5:19 – Because of Satan the whole world (every person) sins
- f. 2:2 – Christ was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world
- g. 1:5-7 – sin is darkness
- h. 3:4 – sin is lawlessness, rebellion
- i. 5:17 – sin is unrighteousness
- j. 1:8, 10 – Sin is universal. Every person is a sinner. Every person sins.

3. Christology – Doctrine of Christ –

- a. The historical man Jesus is:
 - i. The Word of Life (1:1)
 - ii. The Christ (4:2)
 - iii. The Son of God (5:5)
- b. Jesus is called the Son 21 times in 1 John; 2x in 2 John
- c. The Son:
 - i. was with the Father (1:1-2)
 - ii. is the life of God (1:1-2)
 - iii. is the true God (5:20)
 - iv. is eternal life (5:20)
 - v. is sinless (3:5)
 - vi. made atonement for sins of the whole world (2:2; 4:10)
 - vii. destroyed the devil's work (3:8)
- d. The Son made atonement and destroyed the devil's work with his death on the cross
- e. The Son bled blood doing the Father's work of salvation because he was real flesh.

- f. Without being flesh and blood the Christ could not have done what he did and salvation would be something different. Thus, the teacher's/believer's understanding of this is crucial. If a person separates the eternal Son of God and the Christ (Messiah) from the man Jesus they no longer have Christianity or the Gospel. They are a false teacher, the anti-Christ and deceived. (4:1-3)

4. Pneumatology – Doctrine of Holy Spirit –

- a. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to understand the Truth (2:27; 5:7)
- b. The Holy Spirit is a person and is not the Father or the Son (2:27; 4:2, 13; 5:7)
- c. The Holy Spirit is God (2:27; 4:2, 13; 5:7)
- d. The believer has been given the Holy Spirit (3:24)
- e. The Holy Spirit empowers the believer to overcome the world (4:4)
- f. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to recognize the false teacher/false prophet because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (4:6)

5. Soteriology – Doctrine of Salvation –

- a. Jesus work on the cross makes our salvation possible (1 John 2:2; 3:16; 4:10)
- b. By believing and receiving the Son (5:10-13):
 - i. A person is born again (5:1)
 - ii. Becomes a child of God (3:1-2)
 - iii. Receives eternal life, which is now, but not yet. Eternal life has already begun in the believer (2:25; 5:11)
- c. Because of the new birth the believer can now do what is right (2:29). But, yet they can still commit sin (1:8, 10; 2:1), but they will not habitually live in sin (3:6, 7-9)
- d. God lives in the believer and the believer lives in God (4:15-16)
- e. Believers can know God and love others (4:7)

6. Eschatology – Doctrine of End Things –

- a. John referred to his time as “the last hour” (2:18)
- b. Jesus Christ had began the Messianic Age which is approaching it fullness (Now, but not yet.)
- c. There were already “many anti-christs, but yet John was anticipating the future appearance of the Antichrist. (2:18; 4:3)
- d. The is already passing away (2:17)
- e. The day of judgment is coming (4:17), but those who are living in God will have confidence on that day (4:18)
- f. When Christ appears our transformation will be complete and we will be made like him (3:2)

- Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans→

www.generationword.com/notes/first_john/03-Ignatius%20to%20the%20Smyrnaeans.pdf

- Irenaeus' Book →

www.generationword.com/notes/first_john/04-Irenaeus%20in%20Against%20Heresies%20book%203.pdf

SECOND JOHN	85 AD
<i>"Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world." 7</i>	
Author: John	
Written From: Ephesus	
Sent To: A church in Asia	
Purpose: Keep believers in the truth so they have a full reward and provide instructions for rejecting traveling false teachers looking for a place to stay.	
Theme: Do not provide hospitality to false teachers.	
Basic Outline:	
- Verses 4-6, Command to love and definition of love - Verses 7-11, Identify false teachers and command Christians to not support them - Verses 12-13, John says he will visit them and cover more information concerning this issue	
Memorable Verses:	
"This is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands." 6 "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." 7 "Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully." 8 "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him." 10	
Greek Words:	
- ἄντιχριστός – <i>antichristos</i> – antichrist, an opponent of the Christ or Messiah, 7. - μισθός – <i>misthos</i> – payment for labor, reward, wages, refers to the workman's wages, 8. - κοινωνέω – <i>koinoneo</i> – fellowship, communicate, distribute, be partaker, 11.	
Healthy Doctrine:	
- Christian Fellowship - Identification of false doctrine and false teachers	

In verses 4-6 John expresses his joy that some of the believers are walking in the truth as commanded by God the Father. He then tells them to love one another, calling it a command they have had from the beginning. False teachers were providing new revelation and new commands. John refrains from this and sticks to the basics. He then describes love as walking in obedience to God's commands. John ties correct doctrine and correct behavior together.

In verses 7-11 John quickly gets to his main point which is to warn against false teachers who are traveling through the cities and churches in Asia. These false teachers were an early form of Gnosticism which included the false doctrine that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh. These traveling teachers would stay in the homes of people and be sent to the next town with provisions. John tells the believers not to support or help them and to avoid their false teaching. The false teaching could cause believers to lose their rewards because bad doctrine leads to bad performance.

In verses 12-13 John says he has more to say but he wants to teach them face to face and not with paper and ink. John is planning on doing some traveling and teaching in Asia himself.

THIRD JOHN	85 AD
<i>"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." 4</i>	
Author: John Written From: Ephesus Sent To: A church leader in Asia whose pastor was rejecting John's traveling teachers Purpose: A personal letter from John to Gaius to thank him for supporting the true teachers John sent. John also condemns Diotrephes for not accepting true teachers. Five purposes are found in this personal letter: 1. To commend Gaius 2. To instruct and encourage Gaius' support of the men John sent 3. To rebuke Diotrephes 4. To give instruction for Demetrius 5. To inform Gaius of John's plans to visit and deal with Diotrephes	
Theme: Hospitality and support for traveling Christian teachers Basic Outline: • Verses 1-2, official salutation • Verses 3-8, commend Gaius for walking in the truth, helping others to walk in the truth and for supporting the men John sent to travel and to teach • Verses 9-10, condemn Diotrephes for rejecting John, gossiping about John, refusing to welcome John's teachers and preventing others from assisting John's traveling teachers • Verses 11-12, a recommendation for one of John's traveling men, Demetrius, who is probably carrying this letter • Verse 13, John's desire to say more and his plan to visit face to face	

Memorable Verses:

- “I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you; even as your soul is getting along well.” 2
- “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” 4
- “You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.” 6
- “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us.” 9, 10

Greek Words:

- εὐδοῶ - *euodoo* – to be led along a good road, to prosper, to get along well, to succeed, 2.
- ἐκκλησία - *ekklesias* – assembly, church. From ἐκ *ek* meaning “out of” and κλήσις *klesis* “a calling” (from καλέω *kaleo* “to call”). It was used by Greeks to refer to a group of citizens called from the general public to a gathering to discuss the affairs of their government, 6.
- φιλοπρωτευων - *philoproteuon* - to be fond of the first position, to wish to be first, to like to be the leader, loves to be first, 9.
- φλυαρεω - *phluareo* - to talk nonsense, to speak silliness, to bring unjust charges against someone. This word stresses the emptiness of what was said, 10.

Healthy Doctrine:

- Teaching
- Support of Ministry Work

People Mentioned in Third John

Gaius – a church member in a leadership position of his local church in Asia

Demetrius – a traveling teacher sent by John to Gaius’ local church with this letter and to speak and teach in the local church

Diotrephes – a man who has taken the leadership or pastorate position of this local church.

He has rejected John, John’s apostolic doctrine, and representatives sent by John to teach. He is also actively maligning John with false accusations.

John – is the apostle that is sending out men to teach the apostolic doctrine and to help keep the local churches in Asia in the truth.

