



# TRAINING DAY

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

# Intro

# What to Expect

- More Time Spent on 1 John than 2-3 John
- Background & Context before each book
- Overview of Major Themes
- Taking a Look at Difficult Passages
- Q&A throughout
- Breaks and Snacks!

# 1 John

# Intro to Letters of John

- Question: How do the letters of John fit into the Biblical story?
- Answer: John expects the reader to understand 1 John's relationship to the gospel of John

1 John is filled with themes from the unfolding story of God in the Bible: Love, Centrality of Jesus Christ, and Fellowship with God

# Authorship of John

## Considerations

- No claim of authorship in 1 John
- Claim that author is eyewitness to events of Jesus' life
- Some scholars challenge that author is the apostle John
- Early Christian tradition is unanimous on authorship by apostle John
- All ancient manuscripts bear John's name as added title
- Similarities in style, content, and theology to John's Gospel make it virtually certain that same author wrote both
- Therefore, we have great confidence that the author is John, the beloved disciple

# Author's Situation

- John spent later years in Asia Minor around Ephesus
- Left Palestine after Jewish rebellion in 66 AD for Asia Minor
- Stayed in Ephesus until reign of Trajan (98-117 AD)

# Author's Reasons for Writing

## Response to False Teachers

- False teachers have departed and have sown confusion. They are continuing to try to lead others to their false beliefs.

## Protection of Readers

- John wants to protect his readers from being led astray and to assure them that they do indeed have eternal life.

## Reminding & Teaching

- John reminds the readers of the truth about Jesus and he urges them to love each other and to live righteously. He writes to teach them how to discern between false believers and genuine believers



# Audience

- No definitive statement as to identity or location of recipients
- Likely members of churches in and around Ephesus that John knew personally
- Revelation 2 and 3 mention churches in same area (the churches mentioned in Revelation could be the very churches to whom these letters were written)
- Familiar with the Gospel of John

# Date

- Date cannot be fixed with certainty
- Most scholars believe written prior to 95 AD
- 95 AD is when persecution broke out; it seems unlikely John would not have referred to this persecution if it had been going on at time of writing

# Genre

- Canonical designation is as a letter
- Sometimes considered a 'treatise' or sermon
- Not a typical Greco-Roman letter
  - lacks opening greeting
  - No thanksgiving section
  - lacks closing salutations
- Likely intended as circular letter to be passed among several congregations
- We will still refer to it as a letter or epistle, though thinking of it as a poetical sermon makes some sense

# Genre – Rhetoric

Rhetoric – The art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques

Three types

- Judicial rhetoric – intended to persuade people to make a judgment regarding a past event involving a prosecution or defense
- Deliberative rhetoric – intended to persuade people to take some action in the future regarding self-interest and future benefits
- Epideictic rhetoric – intended to bring about a deepening and reaffirmation of values already held in the present

# Genre – Epideictic Speech

1 John is epideictic –intending to bring about a deepening and reaffirmation of the values that they already hold

This is evident in three places

- 1:3 – Intro – John says his purpose is to promote and preserve fellowship
- 1:5-7 – Opening of body of letter – John speaks of walking in the light (i.e., according to the beliefs and values of the community of believers)
- 5:21 – In the conclusion – ‘Keep yourselves from idols,’ is an implicit plea to John’s readers to remain faithful to the values of the community

# Genre - Amplification

Finally, John uses a technique known as amplification.

Amplification – a technique commonly used in ancient Greco-Roman rhetoric which cyclical repetition, hyperbole, stark contrasts as well as a variety of other techniques to place dramatic emphasis on a topic.

This technique is used by John to emphasize a number of topics, especially, life, truth, and love.

The cyclical way John uses this technique is unusual in our day and so we must understand that there is not a linear argument which develops as we see in the book of Romans, for example.

# Opponents

- John refers to these people as 'antichrists' and 'liars'
- Former members of the communities John is writing to
- Deny that Jesus is the Messiah
- Attempting to lead John's readers astray

# Opponents – Who were they?

## Gnostics?

Not likely, since evidence says they didn't exist until later.

## Docetists?

They believed Jesus's humanity was not real; He only appeared to have a physical body.

## Followers of Cerinthus?

Cerinthus taught that the divine Christ descended upon Jesus at baptism and left Him before Crucifixion.



# Opponents – Who were they?

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (d. 107 AD) wrote letters shortly after the writing of 1 John condemning false teachers. Ignatius insisted upon the real humanity of Jesus Christ, that Jesus died on the cross, and that He bodily rose from the dead. He also warned against those who deny these things and those who fail to show love to those in need.

These would seem to be the same false teachers whom John opposes

# Theological Themes

## What John Affirms while Rejecting Secessionists

1. In response to secessionist claim to be intimate with God, John insists that those who know God do right, avoid sin, and love fellow believers.
2. In response to secessionist teaching concerning Jesus, John insists on real humanity of Jesus as Messiah, Son of God, come in the flesh.
3. In response to secessionist teaching concerning the work of Christ, John argues that He came by 'water and blood'; that is, Christ had baptizing ministry and atoned for sins with death on cross

# Theological Themes

## What John Affirms while Reassuring Readers

1. Assurance of fellowship with God based upon objective and ethical grounds: God's testimony about His Son, their own godly living, the loving action for fellow believers
2. Assurance that God hears their prayers, and that praying in God's will assures them they receive what they ask
3. Assurance they had the Holy Spirit, who taught them all they needed to know concerning Christ, so they did not need any teachings of the secessionists.

# Theological Themes

## What John Taught along the Way

1. The nature of God: Light (no sin), love, and the Father of Jesus Christ
2. Those who believe in Jesus have eternal life
3. Jesus died on the cross as atonement for sin
4. Those born of God do not sin (anomia)  
That is, they do not rebel against God by disbelieving in Jesus
5. Believers are anointed by the Holy Spirit which they receive at the beginning of their Christian lives

# Analysis of 1 John

- 1:1-4 Preface concerning the Word of Life
- 1:5-2:2 Claims to know God testified by attitudes toward sin
- 2:3-11 Claims to know God tested by obedience
- 2:12-14 Encouragement for believers of different levels of maturity
- 2:15-17 Warnings against loving the 'world'
- 2:18-27 Warnings against being deceived by the secessionists
- 2:28-3:10 Distinguishing the children of God from the children of the devil
- 3:11-24 The gospel demand to love one another and confidence in prayer
- 4:1-6 Testing the 'spirits'

# Analysis of 1 John

- 4:7-5:4a      Claimed to love God tested by love for fellow believers
- 5:4b-12      Accepting God's testimony and eternal life
- 5:13-21      Concluding reassurance for the reader and an exhortation to pray

# Interpretive Challenges

1:6-7

“Walking in the light” – trusting in Christ  
“Walking in the darkness” – disbelieving

2:7-8

included

Old command – the message heard at the beginning, that is, the gospel message by which they became children of God; it loving other believers

because

New command - Same command to love but is called “new” that is what Jesus said in Gospel of John 13:34

2:15

Love of the word – focus on pleasure and gratification of selfish desires

# Interpretive Challenges

2:18 Antichrists - Those who deny that Jesus is the Christ, God's son

2:27 No one needed to teach you – refers to the things that the secessionists are denying; "all things" does not mean literally "all," but refers only to those things which the secessionists are denying (i.e. that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, come in the flesh)

3:4 Sin is lawlessness – not talking about the Mosaic law; law in that sense is not mentioned



# Interpretive Challenges

3:4-9

This passage seems to contradict 1:8...

The solution lies in the fact that John uses the Greek word *anomia* here for sin that is lawless. This word does not represent the sin that we all still commit.

Rather, it is the act of rebellion against God's coming kingdom (Rejecting Christ).

# Interpretive Challenges

5:6 That Jesus came by water is not in dispute. But what does 'by water' mean?

John's Gospel mentions John the Baptist and his ministry of water baptism.

But the emphasis is on the one who baptizes with the Spirit.

So, all agreed that Jesus had a "baptizing ministry," and the water here is symbolic of Jesus's baptizing believers with the Spirit though we represent it through a water baptism in his name.

5:6 What does 'by blood' mean?

Whatever it is, it is obviously being disputed by the secessionists. It indicates that Jesus died on the cross voluntarily to atone for our sins.

Contrary to secessionists. Jesus ministry was not simply a baptizing one.

# Interpretive Challenges

5:7-8

The Spirit, the water, and the blood agree. What does this mean?

- The Spirit confirms what believers have heard from the beginning
- The water indicates Jesus ministry as a baptizing ministry
- The blood represents his atoning death on the cross

Taken together, the agreement of witnesses seals the truth of the testimonies.

# Interpretive Challenges

5:16-17

'See' indicates an observable sin, not an internal condition. Note that this is a 'brother' or 'sister' in Christ, not an unbeliever that will be given life because of the prayer.

through the

The 'sin that does not lead to death' is the sin which believers commit and for which forgiveness has been secured through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

is

Within the overall context of 1 John, where the secessionists are now regarded as unbelievers, even antichrists, the sin that leads to death is probably the sin of the secessionists, in particular their denial that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh and that his death is necessary for salvation.

(See Matt. 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10)

# 2 John

# 1 John

# 2 John

# 3 John

Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and truth (3:18)	Whom I love in truth (1)	Whom I love in truth (1)
-	I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth (4)	I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth (3)
I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning (2:7)	Not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one that we have had from the beginning (5)	-
Many false prophets have gone out into the world	For many deceivers have gone out into the world	-
Whoever practices righteousness has been born of him (2:29)	-	Whoever does good is from God (11)

## 1 John

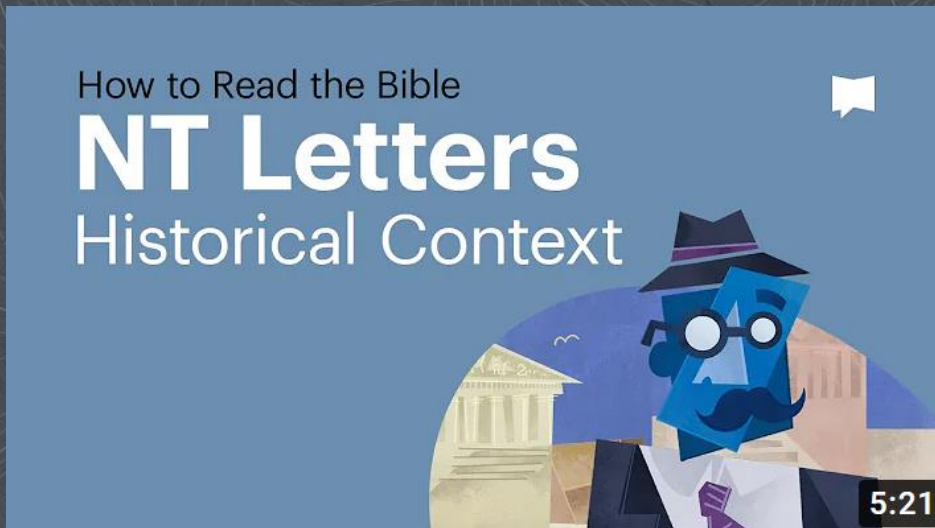
## 2 John

## 3 John

Author	None Stated	The Elder	The Elder
Recipient	None Stated	The elect lady and her children	The beloved Gaius
Greeting	None	Grace, mercy, & peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.	I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.
Type	Theological treatise	Letter to Congregation	Personal Letter

# Someone Else's Mail

These letters are not written *to* us, but rather they're written *for* us  
So, we study context to determine the principles that still apply to us today.



<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/new-testament-letters-epistles-historical-context/>

## Different Contexts to Consider:

- Scriptural – consider the relationship to the Bible's grand story
- Historical – consider the geography and time period
- Situational – consider the specific reason the author put wrote these words down to this audience



# Your Turn –2 John

- Who is the author?
- Who is the recipient?
- What words are repeated?
- What seems to be important to the author?
- What questions does this raise in your mind?

# Your Turn –2 John

- Who is the author? The elder
- Who is the recipient? The elect lady and her children
- What words are repeated? Love, truth, abide
- What seems to be important to the author?
- What questions does this raise in your mind?

# Context – Author & Audience

Author – The apostle John

- Identified within only as “the elder”
- Early manuscripts contained the name “John”
- Similar in style and content to 1 John
- No compelling evidence 2&3 John were not written by the apostle John

Elect Lady – A church congregation overseen by John

- Use of plural throughout letter
- Church often referred to in feminine terms

# Context

- Scriptural – grounded in gospel of John
- Historical – Early church, likely prior to 95 AD
- Situational – Deceivers had left the church and were spreading false teaching about Jesus

It's clear the writer is expressing deep pastoral care for the recipients

# 2 John Outline

Key Word

Watch

Key Verse

2 John 1:8

- Address (1-3)
- Affirm (4-6)
- Alert (7-8)
- Abide (9-11)
- Amen (12-13)

# Address (1-3)

## Word Count

- Truth (x4)
- Love (x2)
- With us, abide (x3)

It is important to remember Johannine vocabulary here. Truth was not only incarnate in Jesus Christ, but it also describes the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the community of love is a community "in truth," namely, a community that has embraced Jesus Christ and experienced the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the threefold blessing of verse 3 is announced triumphantly as a promise, not a wish: "grace, mercy, and peace will be with us." If the truth is with us forever and Jesus is the truth, the gifts of Jesus ("grace, mercy and peace") are likewise certainties.

-The NIV Application Commentary, Letters of John

# Address (1-3)

## What is Love?

“When divorced from truth, love is little more than sentimentality or humanism. If I truly care about my brothers, then I will want them to know truth.”

-Zane C. Hodges,  
The Epistles of John

## What is Truth?

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

-John 14:6

# Address (1-3)

## **Grace – a gift we don't deserve**

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:23-24)

## **Mercy – not receiving the penalty we do deserve**

For the wages of sin is death... (Romans 6:23)

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy. (Titus 3:5)

## **Peace – Christ-centered wellbeing despite surrounding circumstances**

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1)



# Affirm (4-6)

- Affirms the congregation for their faithfulness
- Asks them to keep on loving one another, which looks like walking according to Jesus' commandments.
- "From the beginning" - Grounded in Jesus' life and his teachings as he was the physical representation of God

A new commandment I give to you that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.  
-John 13:34-35

# Alert (7-8)

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

Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.

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

2 John 7-8

- Not one but many
- Have gone out into the world
- Essential issue – Jesus coming in the flesh

# Alert (7-8)

## WHAT IS THE FAITH?

QUESTIONS

OPINIONS

CONVICTIONS

ESSENTIALS

# Alert (7-8)

## Essentials of Christianity:

- Trinity
- Sin
- Deity & humanity of Jesus
- Atonement
- Resurrection
- Salvation by grace alone

# Alert (7-8)

Hypostatic Union: the combination of divine and human natures in the single person of Christ.

- It's essential that Jesus was fully God because...
- It's essential that Jesus was fully human because...

# Abide (9-11)

Everyone who goes on ahead...

“Like men kicking away the ladder on which they have climbed to the heights & leaving themselves without any visible means of support.”

-I. Howard Marshall, The Epistles of John

# Abide (9-11)

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.

2 John 10

- Rom 12:13 "Seek to show hospitality"
- Heb 13:2 "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers"
- 1 Peter 4:9 "Show hospitality to one another without grumbling"

# Amen (12-13)

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. The children of elect sister greet you.

2 John 12-13



# 2 John Timeless Truths

- Hold fast to Jesus and his teachings
- Guard the integrity of the church, specifically by being cautious about who has access to teaching platforms within the church
- DON'T: Use 2 John to reject someone from another religion
- DON'T: Use 2 John to exclude someone in congregation with alternate view on nonessential issues

# 3 John

# 3 John Outline

Key Word

Welcome

Key Verse

3 John 1:8

## 2 John

## 3 John

Address	Salutation (1-4)
Affirm	Support the Mission (5-8)
Alert	Stand Against (9-10)
Abide	Stand With (11-12)
Amen	Signoff (12-15)

# Does God Promise Health?

“Divine healing —spirit, mind, and body – is available today through Jesus who is The Healer (3 John 2).”

- from Oral Robert's University Belief Statement

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

John 16:33

# 3 John Timeless Truths

- Be part of the mission in some capacity  
Matt 28:19-20

# Conclusion

Today, we have lessons we can draw from John's letters as we deal with internal division within and external pressures without.

- Know Jesus as he truly is, because Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God.
- Truth and Love (as God designed love) are essential
- We're all sinners in need of salvation
- Fellowship with God comes only through knowing Jesus

# Questions?