

II & III JOHN

Synopsis: *^ The letters are named after the author, the apostle John. Early Christian writers identified this author as “the beloved apostle.” A theme that connects the two books is hospitality. A significant, and related thought, is expressed in II John 4 and III John 4. “I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.” “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

Author: John

Chapters: 1 in each letter

Background: *^

Both II and III John are personal letters; they deal with some of the themes covered in I John. The letters are thought to have been written from Ephesus about A.D. 90.

II John is addressed to “the elect (chosen) lady and her children” (v.1). This may be a figurative way of referring to the church but the warm, personal tone of the letter makes it possible this was a Christian mother.

III John is addressed to “Gaius” (v. 1). There are at least three Gaiuses in the New Testament (Acts 19:29; 20:4, 5; Rom. 16:23). We do not know which, if any, of these was the Gaius of III John, but he was evidently a fine Christian man.

Hospitality was a vital part of New Testament Christianity (Heb. 13:1, 2). The difficulties of travel and the deplorable condition of public accommodations made hospitality doubly important. Traveling evangelists especially needed this expression of support and concern. The recipients of these two letters were noted for their hospitality (III John 5-8). “The elect lady,” in fact, had to be cautioned about extending it to false teachers (II John 9-11).

Five Great Lessons*

1. It is a serious thing to bring children into the world.
2. We cannot fellowship some people.
3. It is sin when some in the church become power hungry.
4. Some things must be dealt with face to face.
5. It takes courage to face someone like Diotrephes.

*Butterworth, Ken. *God Hath Spoken: An Open-Bible Study Series – New Testament Workbook*, 2006.

^Roper, David. *Through the Bible: A Systematic Study of the Old and New Testament Scriptures*, 1999.

Outlines*

II JOHN

- I. Introduction (vv. 1-4).
- II. Love God, love one another, and walk in truth (vv. 5-6).
- III. Beware of deceivers (vv. 7-11).
- IV. John's desire to see her (vv. 12-13).

III JOHN

- I. Introduction (vv. 1-4).
- II. The work and labor of Gaius (vv. 5-8).
- III. Diotrephes and his hunger for power (vv. 9-10).
- IV. Demetrius and his faithfulness (vv. 11-12).
- V. John's appreciation for Gaius and his desire to see him (vv. 13-14).

Lessons ^

Some today speak of a mysterious figure they call "The Anti-Christ," who will appear before Christ returns. John made it clear, however, that the term did not refer to one individual who would live thousands of years later, but rather to all the Gnostics in his day, who denied Christ came in the flesh (v. 7; see I John 2:18, 19, 22; 4:1-6).

We need to take vv. 9-11 of II John to heart. We should never do anything that would leave the impression we condone error.

Selected*

- II JN 5 Many do not know who false teachers are because they do not know what false doctrine is. Compare I John 2:18-26.
- III JN 7 When a man is full of himself, there is a real problem for all. John called the sinner's name, his sin, accused him of supporting evil, and then gave the solution to this problem.

**Butterworth, Ken. God Hath Spoken: An Open-Bible Study Series – New Testament Workbook, 2006.*

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