

**Subject: *Know Your Bible – Part 32***

**Scripture: *2 John 1:1-13***

**Time, Place, and Purpose of 2 and 3 John**

1. The writer of 2 and 3 John is the apostle John, who also wrote the Gospel of John, the epistle of 1 John, and the Book of Revelation. He is known as the apostle of love, but can also be described as the apostle of truth. John describes himself in 2 and 3 John as “the elder,” which refers to his advanced age as well as his authority as an apostle. John likely wrote both epistles close to the same time, around 90-95 A.D., while he ministered at Ephesus in the latter years of his life.

2. John’s second epistle stresses the importance of knowing and loving the truth. John rejoices that believers are walking in the truth. This walk refers to their daily conduct and lifestyle. Only those who abide in the doctrine of Christ are genuine Christians (vs. 9).

3. John’s second epistle, like 1 John, is about fundamentals of the Christian faith which are truth (vs. 4), love (vs. 5), and obedience (vs. 6).

4. John’s second epistle is addressed to the elect lady and her children (1:1). This should be understood literally as a Christian woman and her children rather than figuratively as a church and its members. These were obviously believers that John came to know in ministry. This Christian lady and her children were obedient to the truth (vs. 4). Her home was the meeting place of believers (vs. 10). She was known for her hospitality and the acceptance of itinerant teachers. John’s second epistle is the only biblical book addressed to a woman.

5. John’s second epistle presents guidelines for Christian hospitality. John addresses the problem of false teachers who apparently sought to make inroads to people under his spiritual care. They wanted to take advantage of Christian hospitality to advance their false teaching. These may have been false teachers who split away from the church (1 Jn. 2:19). John warns his readers to reject anyone who does not teach the truth about Christ (vs. 10). To condone such false teachers is to participate in their evil work (vs. 11). Christians should always exercise love within the bounds of biblical truth (Eph. 4:15; Phil. 1:9). Love must be discerning and truth must never be sacrificed in the name of unity. We must have fellowship with God and fellowship with other Christians, but we cannot have fellowship with false teachers.

6. In John’s usual way he identifies false teachers as antichrist (vs. 7). This was likely the same false teaching that John dealt with in the first epistle, an early form of Gnosticism. In the area of fundamental truth about Christ there can be no tolerance of error or so-called “academic freedom.” The doctrine of the person and work of Christ must be treasured and defended.

7. John has more to write to this lady, but he prefers to have a personal talk about these matters (vs. 12). It is better to deal with some issues in person rather than in writing.

8. All three of John’s epistles develop the theme of fellowship:

- A. First John focuses on *fellowship with God*
- B. Second John warns about *fellowship with false teachers*
- C. Third John encourages *fellowship with Christian brothers*

9. John's second and third epistles are the shortest books in the New Testament. Like 1 and 2 John, 3 John contains the key words "love" and "truth." While 2 John shows the limits of love in dealing with those who do not teach the truth, 3 John shows the necessity of love in helping those who share the truth.

10. John's third epistle refers to three men in the church:

- A. Gaius (vs. 1-8) – a charitable man
- B. Diotrephes (vs. 9-10) – a contentious man
- C. Demetrius (vs. 12) – a commendable man

Gaius had a soul that prospered, a life grounded in and guided by the truth, and a heart for the needy. Diotrephes was a self-centered, arrogant, and prideful trouble-maker. Demetrius was approved by people and by the truth itself. He not only testified of the truth, but the truth testified of him. Every believer should seek to have a life confirmed by the Word of God.

11. Second and Third John have many similarities and one main contrast:

- A. Second John warns against showing hospitality to false teachers
- B. Third John commends showing hospitality to faithful teachers

### **Outline of 2 John**

I. Abide in God's Truth (vs. 1-6)

- A. Salutation (vs. 1-3)
- B. Walk in truth (vs. 4)
- C. Walk in love (vs. 5-6)

II. Abide Not with False Teachers (vs. 7-13)

- A. Doctrine of false teachers (vs. 7-9)
- B. Avoid false teachers (vs. 10-11)
- C. Benediction (vs. 12-13)

### **Outline of 3 John**

I. Commendation of Gaius (vs. 1-8)

II. Condemnation of Diotrephes (vs. 9-11)

III. Commendation of Demetrius (vs. 12)

IV. Conclusion (vs. 13-14)

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