

McCoy Memorial Baptist Church

Date: **March 15, 2023**

Study: "Second and Third John"

Fall Study: Standing Fast in the Last Days: A Study of 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Jude

AUTHENTICITY and AUTHORSHIP

1. AUTHORSHIP:

Both epistles share a remarkable _____ to each other and to 1 John.

2. AUTHENTICITY:

A. 2nd and 3rd John were not as widely _____ as the first epistle. They were also slower to gain universal _____ by the church [due to at least three factors]:

- Their _____.
- Their _____ nature.
- The absence of major _____ in the content.

B. Eusebius (A.D. 265-340) placed 2 & 3 John among the _____ (to speak against). The Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) recognized both as canonical. The church accepted the apostolic authorship by John and conferred canonical status on these two epistles.

READERS / RECIPIENTS

1. The identity of the "elect lady" who is addressed in 2 John is _____.

A. _____ view:

An individual woman (a mother) & her children who provided her home as a meeting place for the local assembly. Verse 13, then, would refer to her sister, and nieces & nephews.

B. _____ view:

The "elect lady" was actually a local congregation. Vs. 13, then, would refer to another congregation.

C. Whichever view is taken does not change the _____ of the letters.

2. The recipient of 3rd John is clearly named, "my dear friend" _____". This was a very common name, and the actual identity of the recipient is not known.

OCCASION and DATE

1. The false teaching John had encountered in his first letter (1 John) was apparently impacting the congregation involved in his second letter: "_____ " were at work (vss. 10-11).

A. The heresy combated in John's first epistle was 1) perverted in its Christology, and 2) woefully deficient in its morality. It denied that Jesus was the Christ; and, in the area of morality the heresy was decidedly antinomian.

B. The heresy combated by John was an early, incipient form of _____. This heresy took many shapes, but always exhibited two primary characteristics (from E. Hiebert):

1) _____.

Gnosticism is derived from the Greek word *ginosko* - "to know". Gnosticism considered themselves the "knowing ones". They were the "_____ " of Christendom, and they viewed the "unenlightened" of the church with contempt.

2) _____.

Gnostics held that matter is evil & spirit is good. These two were in constant conflict. They were most often represented as light (spirit) & darkness (matter). This had many implications, but the most crucial was in the area of the incarnation. The denial of the incarnation took two forms:

a) _____ (from *dokeo*, “to seem, to appear”).

Christ only seemed to have a body. The idea of an incarnate deity was unintelligible and, therefore, rejected. The incarnation was not, therefore, a reality.

b) _____, also known as **adoptionism** (the name comes from the founder, Cerinthus). He and his followers taught that Christ, the divine spirit, came upon the human Jesus at his baptism and left him before the crucifixion.

C. John answers each of these corruptions of *the incarnation*, the *doctrine of sin, knowledge* or false intellectualism, *love for the brothers*, and *salvation*.

2. The primary reason for 3rd John seems to be the planned visit by _____ (3 Jn. 12). He was travelling to the region and probably carried both (or perhaps all 3 epistles).

3. These 2 letters were probably written at the same time as 1 John. “Most scholars place the writing of 2nd and 3rd John around A.D. 95 to 100 based on the traditional understanding of John’s ministry to the churches of that region (western Asia Minor; province of Asia).

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

1. Christian _____.

“They are valuable illustrations of a free and intimate correspondence between Christians which must have been very common in the early Church. They are not of any great doctrinal importance, but they do give us a vivid glimpse into the closing years of the apostolic era with its troubles & its triumphs.” Edmond Hiebert, An Introduction to the New Testament (1975)

2. Christian _____.

“The message of the two epistles is complimentary. They show the place & importance of Christian hospitality in the early church. The second warns against false hospitality which would aid & further false teaching. The third commends Christian hospitality to missionary brethren as the sacred duty of individuals and the churches. It is distinctly the epistle of missionary obligation.” - Edmond Hiebert.

THEME and STRUCTURE

1. THEME

Similarities bet. 2nd and 3rd John extend even to the central theme. Both concern “walking in the truth” (2 John 4 & 3 John 3). A slight, but significant variation occurs in the expression of this common theme.

A. In 2nd John “love” and “obedience” are combined with “truth” in the Christian walk (3, 6).

B. In 3rd John “walking in the truth” results in “working together for the truth” (8).

2. STRUCTURE: These epistles have an almost identical format.

A. They begin with the common identification of the _____, “the elder”.

B. They next identify the _____: “elect lady” and “Gaius”.

C. Both letters offer _____ to the recipient for their adherence to _____ and for their _____.

D. The author makes a similar statement in both letters about the _____ of the letter and about an intended _____ (2 Jn. 12 and 3 Jn. 13-14).