

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

WRITER. The Apostle John.

Date. Probably A.D. 90.

Theme. Second John gives the essentials of the personal walk of the believer in a day when “many deceivers are entered into the world” (v. 7). The key-phrase is “the truth,” by which John means the body of revealed truth, the Scriptures. The Bible, as the only authority for doctrine and life, is the believer’s resource in a time of declension and apostasy.

The Epistle is in three divisions: I. The pathway of truth and love, vs. 1–6. II. The peril of unscriptural ways, vs. 7–11. III. Superscription, vs. 12, 13.

Chapter 1

¹ The elder to *the* elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not I only but also all who have known the truth, ² for the truth’s sake which abides in us and shall be with us to eternity. ³ Grace shall be with you, mercy, peace from God *the* Father, and from *the* Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. ⁴ I rejoiced greatly that I have found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received commandment from the Father.

⁵ And now I beseech thee, lady, not as writing to thee a new commandment, but that which we have had from *the* beginning, that we should love one another. ⁶ And this is love, that we should walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment, according as ye have heard from the beginning, that ye might walk in it.

⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world, they who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in flesh—this is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸ See to yourselves, that we may not lose what we have wrought, but may receive full wages. ⁹ Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God. He that abides in the doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son.

¹⁰ If any one come to you and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into *the* house, and greet him not; ¹¹ for he who greets him partakes in his wicked works.

¹² Having many things to write to you, I would not with paper and ink; but hope to come to you, and to speak mouth to mouth, that our joy may be full. ¹³ The children of thine elect sister greet thee.

1:5 Law (of Christ), Summary: The new “law of Christ” is the divine love, as wrought into the renewed heart by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5; Heb. 10:16), and outflowing in the energy of the Spirit, unforced and spontaneous, toward the objects of the divine love (2 Cor. 5:14–20; 1 Thes. 2:7, 8). It is, therefore, “the law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25; 2:12), in contrast with the external law of Moses. Moses’ law demands love (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5; Lk. 10:27); Christ’s law is love (Rom. 5:5; 1 John 4:7, 19, 20), and so takes the place of the external law by fulfilling it (Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14). It is the “law written in the heart” under the New Covenant (Heb. 8:8, *note*).

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

WRITER. The Apostle John.

Date. Probably about A.D. 90.

Theme. The aged Apostle had written to a church which allowed one Diotrephes to exercise an authority common enough in later ages, but wholly new in the primitive churches. Diotrephes had rejected the apostolic letters and authority. It appears also that he had refused the ministry of visiting brethren (v. 10), and cast out those who received them. Historically, this letter marks the beginning of that clerical and priestly assumption over the churches in which the primitive church order disappeared. This Epistle reveals, as well, the believer's resource in such a day. No longer writing as an apostle, but as an elder, John addresses this letter, not to the church as such, but to a faithful man in the church for the comfort and encouragement of those who were standing fast in the primitive simplicity. Second John conditions the personal walk of a Christian in a day of apostasy; Third John the personal responsibility in such a day of the believer as a member of the local church. The key-phrase is "the truth" (see 2 John, Introduction).

There are three divisions: I. Personal greetings, vs. 1–4. II. Instructions concerning ministering brethren, vs. 5–8. III. The apostate leader, and the good Demetrius, vs. 9–14.

Chapter 1

¹ The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. ² Beloved, I desire that in all things thou shouldest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers.

³ For I rejoiced exceedingly when *the* brethren came and bore testimony to thy *holding fast the truth*, even as thou walkest in truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than these things that I hear of my children walking in the truth. ⁵ Beloved, thou doest faithfully *in* whatever thou mayest have wrought towards the brethren and that strangers, ⁶ (who have witnessed of thy love before *the* assembly,) in setting forward whom on their journey worthily of God, thou wilt do well; ⁷ for for the name have they gone forth, taking nothing of those of the nations. ⁸ We therefore ought to receive such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.

⁹ I wrote something to the assembly; but Diotrephes, who loves to have the first place among them, receives us not. ¹⁰ For this reason, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he does, babbling against us with wicked words; and not content with these, neither does he himself receive the brethren; and those who would he prevents, and casts *them* out of the assembly. ¹¹ Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He that does good is of God. He that does evil has not seen God.

¹² Demetrius has witness borne to him by all, and by the truth itself; and we also bear witness, and thou knowest that our witness is true. ¹³ I had many things to write to thee, but I will not with ink and pen write to thee; ¹⁴ but I hope soon to see thee, and we will speak mouth to mouth. Peace *be* to thee. The friends greet thee. Greet the friends by name.