



1st 2nd & 3rd
John
CLASS
PRESENTATION 21

OVERVIEW:

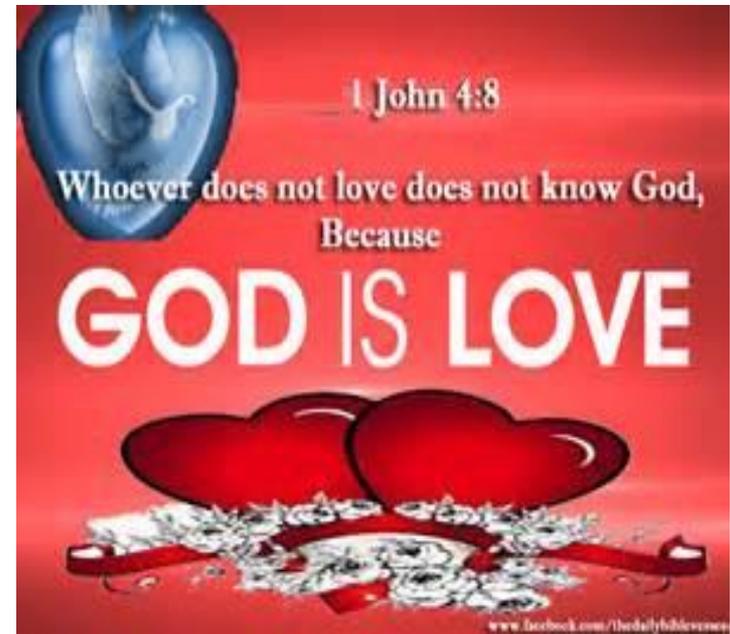
The purpose of the letter is to combat certain false ideas (heresies), especially about Jesus, and to deepen the spiritual and social awareness of the Christian community (1 John 3:17). Some former members (1 John 2:19) of the community refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ (1 John 2:22) and denied that he was a true man (1 John 4:2).

The author sets forth the very Johannine theme of light and darkness, Christians and the world, and truth (light) and error to illustrate the threats and responsibilities of Christian life (darkness). It cannot be by coincidence that in both documents we find the ever-recurring and most distinctive words light, darkness, truth, life, and love; the strictly Johannine phrases "to walk in the light", "to be of the truth", "to be of the devil", "to be of the world", "to overcome the world", etc. The specific heresy described in this letter cannot be identified exactly, but it is a form of docetism (the doctrine denied the humanity of Christ to insure that his divinity was untainted). or of gnosticism, (viewed the appearance of Christ as a mere stepping-stone to higher knowledge of God).

These theological errors are rejected by an appeal to the reality and continuity of the apostolic witness to Jesus. The author affirms that authentic Christian love, ethics, and faith take place only within the historical revelation and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The fullness of Christian life as fellowship with the Father must be based on true belief and result in charitable living; knowledge of God and love for one another are inseparable, and error in one area inevitably affects the other.

The author wrote the epistle so that the joy of his audience would "be full" (1 John 1:4) and that they would "not practice sin" (1 John 2:1) and that "you who believe in the name of the Son of God... may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

It is evident through the Epistle that the author was concerned about heretical teachers that had been influencing churches under his care (orthodox vs. heterodox). Such teachers were considered



Antichrists (1 John 2:18–19) who had once been church leaders but whose teaching became heterodox. That error stated that Jesus came to earth as a spirit without a real body of flesh, negating his Incarnation (1 John 4:2), that his death on the cross was not as a true atonement for sins (1 John 1:7), negating the sacrifice of the Cross as the expiation of sin from humanity.

The purpose of the author (1:1–4) is to declare the Word of Life to those to whom he writes, in order that they might be united in fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. He shows that the means of union with God are:

1) On the part of Christ, his atoning work (1 John 1:7; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 3:5; 1 John 4:10, 14; 1 John 5:11, 12) and his advocacy (1 John 2:1). 2), On the part of humanity, holiness (1 John 1:6), obedience (1 John 2:3), purity (1 John 3:3), faith (1 John 3:23; 1 John 4:3; 1 John 5:5), and love (1 John 2:7, 8; 1 John 3:14; 1 John 4:7; 1 John 5:1).

CONTENT OF 1st JOHN:

On the Prologue (1 John 1:1–4), we see, as in the Gospel of John, Jesus being referred as the “Word of Life”. He existed from the beginning: “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life—a for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us”.(1 John 1:1–2).

It continues with John’s familiar theme of God as light: “Now this is the message that we have heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say, “We have fellowship with him,” while we continue to walk in darkness, we lie and do not act in truth”. (1 John 1:6–6), and that we must confront and admit our sins to be forgiven: “If we say, “We are without sin,” we deceive ourselves,* and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing. If we say, “We have not sinned,” we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1 John 1: 8-10).

It continues in Chapter 2 by identifying Jesus Christ as the expiation of sin: “My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins and not for our sins only but for

those of the whole world.” (1 John 2: 1-2).

John calls on them to remain faithful as children of God, and not to be misguided by “antichrists” to achieve eternal life: “Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made us: eternal life.” (1 John 2: 24-25).

John calls them to act in righteousness and to avoid sin: “Everyone who commits sin commits lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who remains in him sins; no one who sins has seen him or known him. Children, let no one deceive you. The person who acts in righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. Whoever sins belongs to the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. Indeed, the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is begotten by God commits sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot sin because he is begotten by God.” (1 John 3: 4-9).

In Chapter 4, John teaches his flock to “test the spirits”, to see who belongs to God in Christ: “Beloved, do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God, and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God. This is the spirit of the antichrist that, as you heard, is to come, but in fact is already in the world.” (1 John 4: 1-3).

God’s love is manifested in Christ, to prove that love, we must love one another: “Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have confidence on the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”. (1 John 4: 15-21).

Victory in the world is achieved thru Christ: *“Who [indeed] is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth. So there are three that testify, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and the three are of one accord”* (1 John 5: 5-8).

1st John contains 5 (five) chapters.

Outline of 1st John

- I. Prologue (1:1–4)
- II. God as Light (1:5–3:10)
- III. Love for One Another (3:11–5:12)
- IV. Epilogue (5:13–21)

2nd JOHN:

INTRODUCTION:

2nd John is the 24th book of the New Testament of the Bible, traditionally held to have been written by John the Evangelist.

AUTHORSHIP:

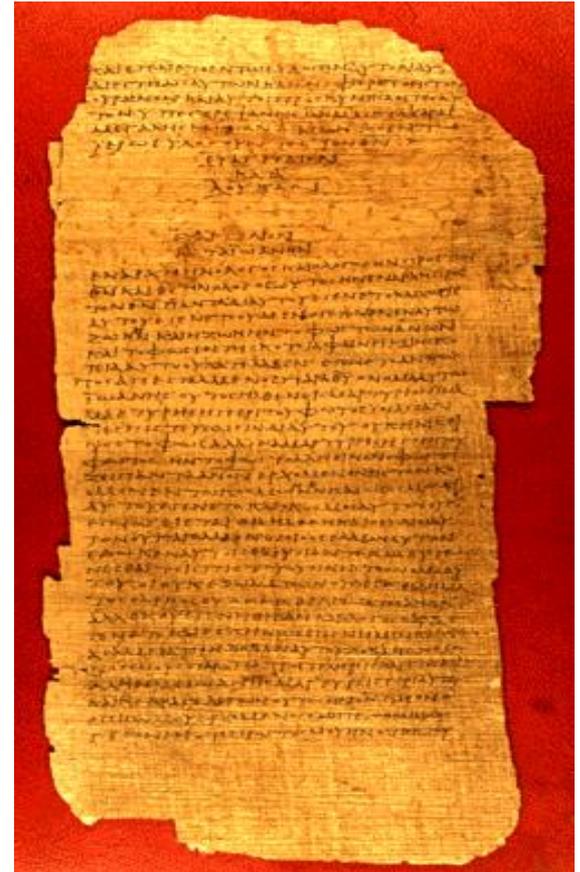
As in 1 John, The epistle is traditionally held to have been composed by John the Evangelist. The authenticity of this 2nd letter, as that of the 1st, is also attested by very early Church Fathers.

WHEN AND WAS IT WRITTEN WHERE (AND CONTEXT):

The epistle is traditionally held to have been composed at Ephesus, when the writer was in advanced age, and is generally considered to be written after the Gospel of John, circa or after 95 AD, towards the end of the Apostolic Era, after 1 John.

OVERVIEW:

The style and manner of the second letter are very like to those of the first. The destination of the letter has been much disputed. John urges on to faith in Jesus Christ, to the avoidance of heretics, and to love as Christ called us to do.



"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." (2 John 1:7) This establishes that, from the time the epistle was first written, there were those who had errant Christology, believing that the human person of Jesus was actually pure spirit, instead of fully human and fully divine.

CONTENT OF 2nd John:

2nd John was written to *"the elect lady and her children"* (2 John 1:1). Who is the lady elect? We do not know, because her name is omitted? St. Jerome thought that the letter was addressed to a particular church. Others thought it was to a particular person.

John reminds the Church that Christ is the *"truth and love"* (2 John 3). *"I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth just as we were commanded by the Father. But now, Lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing a new commandment but the one we have had from the beginning: let us love one another. For this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, as you heard from the beginning, in which you should walk."* (2 John 4-6).

2 John then goes into stern warnings against false teachers: *"Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh; such is the deceitful one and the antichrist. Look to yourselves that you do not lose what we worked for but may receive a full recompense. Anyone who is so "progressive"(literally, "Anyone who goes ahead.") as not to remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God; whoever remains in the teaching has the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him in your house or even greet him; for whoever greets him shares in his evil works."* (2 John 7-11).

2nd John contains 1 (one) chapter.

Outline of 2nd John:

I.) Introduction (2 John 1).

II.) Walking in truth and warning about False Teachers (2 John 2-11)).

III.) Conclusion (2 John 12-13).

3 JOHN:

INTRODUCTION:

The 3rd Epistle of John (also referred to as 3 John) is the 25th book of the New Testament.

AUTHORSHIP:

As in 1 John and 2 John, the 3rd epistle of John is traditionally held to have been composed by John the Evangelist, who identifies himself as “the Presbyter”. The language of this epistle is remarkably similar to 2 John, and it is the scholarly consensus that the same man wrote both of these letters.

WHEN AND WAS IT WRITTEN WHERE (AND CONTEXT):

The epistle is held to have been composed at Ephesus, when the writer was in advanced age, and is generally considered to be written, circa or after 95 AD.

OVERVIEW:

In contrast to the other two letters of John, this work was addressed to a specific individual, Gaius. This letter is less theological in content and purpose. The letter is apparently a genuine private letter, written for the purpose of commending to Gaius a party of Christians led by person named Demetrius, who were strangers to the place where Demetrius lived, and who had gone on a mission to preach the Gospel (3 John 7).

CONTENT OF 3 JOHN:

The Presbyter is asking Gaius to assist some pilgrims: “Beloved, you are faithful in all you do for the brothers, especially for strangers; they have testified to your love before the church. Please help them in a way worthy of God to continue their journey.” (3 John 5 – 6).

The author is critical of a local leader: *“I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to dominate, does not acknowledge us. Therefore, if I come, I will draw attention to what he is doing, spreading evil nonsense about us. And not content with that, he will not receive the brothers, hindering those who wish to do so and expelling them from the church.”* (3 John 9-10). Gaius is encouraged to “*Walk in the truth*”: the common Johannine term to describe Christian living; this description presents Gaius as following the teachings of the Presbyter in contrast to Diotrephes.

3 John contains one (1) chapters.

RESOURCES USED AND RECOMENDED:

- NAB Bible, at: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>
- The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, Edited by Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Union Theological Seminary, New York; NY, William J. Dalton, S. J.; Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm. (emeritus) The Divinity School, Duke University, Durham, NC; [The Johannine Epistles, PHEME PERKINS], with a foreword by His Eminence Carlo Maria Cardinal Martini, S.J.; Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1990
- Agape Bible Study at: http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/Agape_Bible_Studies_Menu.php
- New Testament Letter Structure, from Catholic Resources by Felix Just, S.J.
At: http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/NT_Letters.htm#Edited
- Brown, Raymond E. An Introduction to the New Testament. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Brown, Raymond Edward. The Epistles of John. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982.
- Early Christian Writers at: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com.html>
- Guthrie, Donald. Introduction to the New Testament 4th ed. Leicester: Apollos, 1990.

Scripture and/or texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible (NAB), revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C.