

Bible Survey

Lesson 21 – 1, 2, 3 John

1 John

1. The Background and Purpose

This epistle is keyed to personal experience and for this reason it is extremely difficult to follow a single line of thought. Each of the subjects mentioned in this letter could very well be a theme in itself. John seems to seek to impress upon these Christians the certainty of the possession of eternal life (5:13). Throughout his letter he proposes certain tests whereby that certainty can be attained. The phrase “we know” is used thirteen times to signify the certainty that is achieved through experience, or that is a part of normal spiritual life (2:3,5,29; 3:14,16-19,24; 4:13,16; 5:15,18,19,20).

John’s purpose is to build up his “children” in the faith. He states this purpose several times (1:4; 2:1,26; 5:13).

2. The Author

John the apostle, The beloved disciple

3. The Recipients

We are not told to whom this letter was written. It is believed that it was written to the churches in Asia, since John spent a number of years ministering in that area.

4. The Date

Near the end of the first century

5. The Theme

Assurance and Tests of Salvation

6. The Key Verse

5:13

7. The Highlights

1 JOHN

ASSURANCE AND TESTS OF SALVATION

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|---|---|---|-------------|
| <p>1:1</p> <p>Walking in the Light</p> | <p>2:29</p> <p>3:1</p> <p>Abiding in Love</p> | <p>4:21</p> <p>5:1</p> <p>Exercise of Faith</p> | <p>5:21</p> |
| <p>Enemies of Fellowship</p> <p>2:18-29</p> <p>Conditions of Fellowship</p> <p>1:5-2:17</p> | <p>Characteristics of True Believers</p> <p>4:7-21</p> <p>Characteristics of False Teachers</p> <p>4:1-6</p> <p>Characteristics of Fellowship</p> <p>3:1-18</p> | <p>Has Faith in Christ 5:1</p> <p>Loves God 5:2</p> <p>Keeps Commandments 5:2-3</p> <p>Overcomes the world 5:4-8</p> <p>Believes God 5:9-11</p> <p>Has Life 5:12</p> <p>Has Assurance 5:13</p> <p>Has Confidence in Prayer 5:14-15</p> <p>Helps His Brother 5:16-17</p> <p>Does not sin habitually 5:18</p> <p>Knows that he is God 5:19</p> <p>Knows that Christ has come 5:20</p> | |

2 John

1. The Purpose

It is supposed that there are several purposes for the writing of this epistle:

- To commend the recipients for their loyalty
- To warn against extending hospitality to those who abide not in the doctrine of Christ
- To urge them to continue to walk in love

However, in establishing the theme, it seems as though the real purpose of this letter was to warn the recipients of the danger of compromising with false teachers. But, before John shared this word of warning he was certain to recognize their loyalty in the past (v.4) and the need to continue to walk in loyalty and love because there are “many deceivers entered into the world.” Then, in verses 8-11, it seems as though he reaches the climax and purpose of this short but important note – Don’t Compromise!

2. The Theme

Don’t Compromise

3. The Key Verses

10-11

4. The Outline

I. The Salutation 1-3

II. The Body 4-11

A. The walk of love and truth 4-6

B. The warning against a deceiver and antichrist 7-11

III. The Benediction 12-13

2 JOHN

**DON'T
COMPROMISE**

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| The Body 4-11 | | The Benediction 12-13 |
| The Walk of Love and Truth 4-6 | The Warning Against a Deceiver and Antichrist 7-11 | |
| The Salutation 1-3 | | |

GLS

3 John

1. The Purpose

While 2 John warns against having fellowship with those who are false teachers and who deny the “doctrine of Christ,” 3 John warns against **refusing to have fellowship** with those who are true believers. John had sent certain faithful servants of God to minister to this church. But Diotrephes, a leader in the church, refused to receive these men and refused to have fellowship with them (v.10). In fact, he even threatened to throw anyone out of the church who did fellowship with them (v.10). For this reason, there is a need to assure Gaius that he was right to fellowship with these men (5-8) and to assure them that Demetrius is a godly man (12).

2. The Theme

Receive True Believers

3. The Key Verse

8

4. The Outline

- I. Salutation 1
- II. Gaius 2-8
 - A. Commendation of Gaius 5-6a
 - B. Instruction to Gaius 6-8
- III. Diotrephes 9-11
 - A. Conduct of Diotrephes 9-10
 - B. Caution to Gaius 11
- IV. Demetrius 12
- V. Benediction 13-14

3 JOHN

RECEIVE TRUE
BELIEVERS

The Benediction 13-14

Demetrius 12

Diotrephes 9-11

Gaius 2-8

The Salutation 1

Things to Know

1 John

- John gives assurance of salvation and tests of salvation as well
- Theme – “Assurance and Tests of Salvation”
- It is possible to know that we have eternal life (5:13)

2 John

- Theme – “Don’t Compromise”

3 John

- Theme – “Receive True Believers”