

2 John: a brief note to one church

vv.1-3 Greetings

vv.4-6 “Love one another”

vv.7-11 Reject false teaching and false teachers

vv.12-13 Conclusion and hope for in-person meeting

3 John: a note to Gaius

vv.1-4 Joyful greeting to Gaius

vv.5-8 Encouragement to continue supporting teachers

vv.9-10 Warning about Diotrephes

vv.11-12 encouragement about Demetrius

vv.13-15 Conclusion and hope for in-person meeting

Q: How do we explain John’s command to love and his treatment of false teachers (e.g., in 3 John)?

What is the extent of the atonement?

“This death of God’s Son is the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; it is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world.” (Canons of Dort, Pt. 2, Art. 3)

28-Apr-24	Jude
5-May-24	The Old Testament in the New Testament
12-May-24	Revelation
19-May-24	Our Future Hope

New Testament Survey

Class 30: Letters of John

Author:

- Unnamed in 1 John; “The elder” in 2 and 3 John
- Note shared concepts and verbal echoes between 1-3 John, the Gospel of John (e.g., emphasis on “believing” more than “faith”), and Revelation 1-3
- Early church identified John the apostle as the author of 1 John
- 2 and 3 John were slower to find wide acceptance in the early church, mostly due to their brevity and less frequent use

Recipients:

- Unnamed in 1 John; the “elect lady” (= a specific church?) in 2 John; “Gaius” in 3 John
- 2 and 3 John probably functioned as cover letters for 1 John

Themes: Note that 1 John follows a pattern, more than a simple outline. His language is circular, often returning to key themes and adding to them with each pass.

1. Faith: hold fast to true doctrine
2. Obedience: Our actions should reflect Jesus’s actions
3. Love: God’s love invariably produces love for brothers and sisters in fellow Christians

Purpose Statements in 1 John:

1:3 - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1:4 - And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

2:1 - My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2:7 - Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

2:8 - At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

2:12-14 - I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

2:21 - I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

2:26 - I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

5:13 - I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

Outline of 1 John

1. Foundation of proclamation: personal, eyewitness testimony (1:1-4)
2. Fellowship with Jesus and one another through forgiveness (1:5-10)
3. Forgiveness and obedience when Jesus is our advocate (2:1-6)

4. An old new commandment: love one another (2:7-11)
Cf. Jesus's "new commandment" in John 13:34-35

5. John's purpose: A guarantee of assurance (2:12-14)

6. No divided allegiance: God or the world (2:15-27)

7. Encouragement for endurance (2:28-3:3)

Cf. "abiding" in Jesus in John 15:1-10

8. Christian righteousness antithetical to worldly conduct (3:4-10)

9. Love for fellow Christians is proof of new life (3:11-15)

10. Love is not mere words, but action (3:16-18)

11. Assurance grounded in faith and obedience (and love?; 3:19-24)

12. True prophets acknowledge Jesus's incarnation (4:1-6)

13. God's love, revealed by sending his Son, is model for our love (4:7-12)

14. Assurance: confessing Jesus's sonship; God's love in us (4:13-21)
Note: There is no option in the New Testament for "I love Jesus but I don't love the church."

15. Overcoming the world: Faith, obedience, and love (5:1-5)

16. Eternal life through belief in Jesus, the Son of God (5:6-12)

17. Conclusion: Confidence and prayer (5:13-21)