



Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together

Eighth Series: "The Right Edge" New Testament: Epistles

Lesson 29: 1, 2 and 3 John and Jude

1 John

I. Introduction

- A. The purpose of the entire Epistle is to meet the doctrinal and practical needs of new Christians.
- B. Four specific reasons:
 - 1. vs. 1:4 That their joy be full
 - 2. vs. 2:1 To keep them from sin
 - 3. vs. 5:13 To lead them to an assurance of salvation
 - 4. vs. 2:26 To warn them against those that would lead them in error
- C. Four "liars"
 - 1. Lying about fellowship (1 John 1:6-7)
 - 2. Lying about our nature (1 John 1:8)
 - 3. Lying about deeds, saying we haven't sinned
 - 4. Lying about obedience, saying we've kept commandments when we haven't (1 John 2:4-6)
- D. Sin in the Christian life breaks fellowship, but not sonship. Daily fellowship changes, but sonship remains the same.
 - 1. Since the basic theme is fellowship with God, certain conditions are laid down for us to follow:
 - a. Vs. 5-7 To have fellowship, you must walk in the light
 - b. Vs. 8 We must admit our sin, otherwise we are liars
 - c. Vs. 9-10 When we confess, He forgives and cleanses
 - 2. Confess
 - a. Definition: to say the same thing or to confess sin is to say the same thing God says about it.
 - b. Immediate confession (1 John 1:9-10) keeps the fellowship unbroken. This fellowship is then maintained by Jesus Christ, our advocate (1 John 2:1)

- E. Advocacy is that work of Christ for sinner saints. The word advocate means “one who pleads the case,” and is the same as “comforter” in John 14:16. The Holy Spirit represents Christ to us on earth; and the Son represents us to God in heaven. His wounds testify he died for us and therefore, as our advocate, can forgive when we confess our sins. (Rom. 8:31-34)

II. The Author

From the earliest days of the church, John was universally recognized as the author. It is likely that this is John the apostle (the writer of the Gospel of John).

III. The audience

Believers who were well established in truth (see 2:7, 18-27, 3:11). Notice the terms “beloved” and “my little children.”

IV. The date

Probably written from Ephesus before 95 AD

2 John

I. Author

Still John the Apostle

II. Audience

- A. To the Elder Lady (a Christian matron) in Ephesus or the church in Ephesus
- B. “And her children” (true offspring of this Christian woman) or actual members of this church

III. Date

Written approximately the same time as 1 John – around 90 AD

IV. Special Notes

- A. Abject truth in relation to the believer: Its positive reflection – verses 1-6
 1. Truth: The source of love – verse 1 (1 John 4:7-11)
 2. Truth: The source of fellowship – Verse 1
 3. Truth: Eternally dwelling in the believer – Verse 2
 4. Truth: Jesus is the Truth (John 14:16)
 5. Truth: (with love) The course of greeting – verse 3
 6. Truth: The source of our walk – verses 4-6
- B. The absence of truth in relation to the apostate teachers – verse 7-13
 1. Error (the absence of truth) has many advocates – verse 7

- a. They deny the incarnation of Jesus Christ
- b. They are called deceivers or anti-Christ (see 1 John 4:3)
2. 1 John 4:1 – Try the spirits...many false prophets
Are they godly in character/walk of life? Do they square up with the scriptures?
Where's the focus of their message? Is their ministry within the checks and balances of scripture and other godly men?
3. Error must be guarded against (verse 8). Our diligence has a reward.

3 John

I. Author

- A. John (the Elder)
- B. His nature:
 1. Lots of enthusiasm: Mark 3:17
 2. Somewhat intolerant: Mark 9:38
 3. Vindictive: Luke 9:54
 4. Ambitious: Mark 10:35-37
- C. His nature, yielded to Christ:
 1. "The lesson of love in the school of Christ"
See John 13:23, 1 John 2:9-10, 3:14-18, 4:7-11
 2. He is entrusted with the care of Christ's mother – see John 19:26
 3. He refers to Christian love more than 25 times in his epistles

II. Audience

Another personal letter – this one to a man named Gaius

III. Date

Sometime after 80 AD, probably written in Ephesus

IV. Occasion

John is sending out a few missionaries who expect to pass through Gaius' city. John asks Gaius to provide lodging for these men and to help them on their way.

V. Special Notes:

- A. In the ancient world, hospitality was a sacred duty. In fact, the law enjoined kindness to strangers (Lev. 19:33-34). The Greeks had an instinctive dislike of taking money for the giving of hospitality. Inns were notoriously unsatisfactory – for many reasons! Thus, the very real need for hospitality.
- B. For the Christian – The New Testament concept is "philoxinia" – loving strangers!

1. Romans 12:13 – One of the duties of the church
2. 1 Peter 4:9 – Do so without complaining
3. 1 Timothy 5:10 – Expected of women
4. Titus 1:8 – A quality required of a pastor
5. Hebrews 13:2 – You might be entertaining angels
6. Their responsibility: “We are bound to support such men to prove ourselves allies of the truth.” (verse 8) Hospitality was the outward result of living a godly life.

C. The testimonies of the two men

1. Diotrephes vs. 9-11
 - a. His name means “nurtured by Zeus.” It is strange that he had not changed his name, as was the custom of the Greek believers. He was a representative of a local congregation. The Elder (John) had sent him a previous letter, which was lost.
 - b. The Issue: Diotrephes would not accept John’s authority. He rejected those who were still prepared to accept John’s authority. He loved to FIRST!!! He wanted the LIMELIGHT.
 - c. His testimony: He influenced others just “for the show”!!! (see Matt. 23:5-12). He used his words to slander (See James 1:26).
2. Demetrius vs. 12
 - a. He is probably the carrier of this letter. He had the respect of all men.
 - b. His testimony: His spiritual reputation is well know and acknowledged by John. His record is “True.”
 - c. “The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips, he walked with me in peace and equity and did not turn away from iniquity.” Mal. 2:6

Jude

I. Author

- A. “...Jude was one of the Lord’s brothers, called Judas in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3. His older brother James (note his position on the two lists) was the famous leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13-21) and author of the Epistle that bears his name. Like his brothers, Jude did not believe in Jesus before the Resurrection (John 7:1-9; Acts 1:14). The only other biblical allusion to him is in First Corinthians 9:5 where it is recorded that “the brother of the Lord” took their wives along on their missionary journeys (the Judas of Acts 15:22, 32 may be another reference to him).” (Talk thru the Bible, p. 501)

II. Audience

Likely a mixture of Gentile and Jewish believers who were being threatened by apostates who rejected Christ.

III. Date

It is very difficult to date this epistle, but because of its relationship to 2 Peter (which we can date between 64-66 AD) – it was probably written 66-80 AD.

IV. Special Notes:

A. Theme:

1. Condemn the practices of these apostate who had infiltrated the churches.
2. Counsel believers to stand firm and grow in their faith.

B. Note the strong similarity to 2 Peter 2:1-3:4

V. So what?

A. These “postcards” have much to say to our daily lives

Discussion Questions:

1. How does a believer “build themselves up” (Jude 20)?
2. Discuss hospitality. What does it look like in your life/home? (3 John 8)
3. Discuss biblical confession (1 John 1:9). What is it? What is it not?