



literary flow

Summary (Time/People/Purpose) | Themes | Outline

John’s second and third letters are companions to the first one he penned. The same antichrist sentiments continued to circulate around the [Ephesian] church. Whereas the first letter provided general tests of faith—belief in the Incarnation and a life of love—the latter epistles command purity in truth and mission. Second John warns the church (“elect lady”) to keep her doors shut to false teachers. Third John encourages the church (through Gaius, its leader) to treat true missionaries with gracious welcome. Truth and mission must energize the church.

Themes	Key [Root] Words
<p>Biblical Truth: Objective, revealed fact as confirmed in/by Scripture</p> <p>Incarnation: term describing Jesus becoming a human being—flesh and blood; tempted and tortured; fully God and fully man.</p> <p>Antichrist: general label for someone who rejects Jesus as God’s Son; also a title for key End Times’ opponent of God.</p> <p>Welcome/Give a Greeting: mark of hospitality and fellowship</p>	<p>true/truth (12x)</p> <p>n.v.a. love/beloved (9x)</p> <p>walk (5x)</p> <p>testify/testimony (5x)</p> <p>children (4x)</p> <p>commandments (4x)</p>

2 John	3 John
<p>From: The Elder (John)</p> <p>To: The Elect Lady (church) Greetings (1-3)</p> <p>The Elder rejoices in their love and belief (4-6)</p> <p>The Elder warns against antichrists (7-11)</p> <p>Farewell: The Elder intends to visit (12-13)</p>	<p>From: The Elder (John)</p> <p>To: beloved Gaius Prayer & Thanks (1-4)</p> <p>The Elder encourages missionary support (5-8)</p> <p>The Elder rebukes arrogant leadership (9-10)</p> <p>The Elder encourages good living (11-12)</p> <p>Farewell: The Elder intends to visit (13-14)</p>



redemptive threads

Antichrist | Truth | Mission

John’s first letter did not silence the **antichrists**. They continued to spread their errant beliefs, so John exposes them in the second correspondence. Their denial of the incarnation—that Jesus lived in flesh in blood—was significant. If Jesus did not live the flesh-and-blood life predicted by the prophet Isaiah (ch. 53) and described in the gospels, His death would be a mirage. It could not satisfy the sacrificial system (e.g., Leviticus), fulfill the law (e.g., Exodus 20-23), or pay the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23). Incarnation is essential to atonement (1 John 2:2).

Incarnation enables resurrection (John 20-21). Thus, John dutifully uproots **antichrist** ideas and condemns not only **antichrist** teachers, but anyone who aids and abets **antichrist** thinking by means of hospitality (2 Jn 10-11). Finally, it is important to note that in John’s letters, **antichrist** is never a singular figure (a.k.a., The Antichrist), but always a categorical term for those who misrepresent Jesus (1 Jn 2:18ff; 4:1-3; 2 Jn 7). Those who strip Jesus of His humanity or deity, and endow Him with a non-biblical history (e.g., husband of Mary) or lump Him together with the great moral teachers of the ages (e.g., Mohammed, Ghandi, Ed Lewis) are antichrists.

Rather than relying on myth and speculation, John wants His readers to embrace **truth** (3 Jn 4). Overwhelmingly, the notion of **truth** dominates these letters. **Truth** stands against deception. **Truth** finds its basis in reliable testimony—both apostolic witness of the life of Jesus (1 Jn 1:1-4) and the internal witness of love and maturity in the church (2 Jn 9; 3 Jn 11). Thus, both objective claims and subjective experiences constitute **truth**. The early church understood the centrality of God’s revelation—OT Scriptures and the formation of the NT canon evident in Paul’s letters, gospel accounts, and various epistles in circulation. However, to “walk in **truth**” requires more mental agreement with biblical teaching; it demands obedience (2 Jn 4-6).

While love receives most of John’s attention, he likewise stresses obedience in **mission**. In fact, these letters reveal the ongoing friction between the **mission** of God and the **mission** of the devil. Jesus came to give life; the devil lives to destroy. Jesus came to forgive; the devil lives to condemn. And whether we live as itinerant preachers or Christian neighbors, we are called to aid and abet God’s **mission**. Our partnership, John says, begins with whom we let in the door.

<p>Reality of False Prophets (Deut 13:3-4)</p>	<p>“...you shall not listen to the words of that [false] prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.”</p>
---	---



practical application

The Partner Church:

- Be a _____ Partner in God’s Mission: *Do not welcome* (2 John 10-11).
- Be a _____ Partner in God’s Mission: *Work together for truth* (3 John 5-8).

2, 3 John Reading Challenge		S	M	T	W	R	F	S
Immersion, Fluency & Essential	2, 3 John							