



The First Epistle of St John

St John Wrote

The Gospel

**Three
Epistles**

Revelation

Christ is God

**Christ is the
Propitiation (2:2)**

Christ is the King

Divinity

Kononia

Glory

**“That you may
believe” (20:31)**

**“That you may
know” (5:13)**

**“That you may
see” (3:18)**

1 John

"The Life"

2 John

"The Truth"

3 John

"The Way"

المحبة

رسائل يوحنا

الحياة

رسالة يوحنا الأولى

الحق

رسالة يوحنا الثانية

الطريق

رسالة يوحنا الثالثة

UNIQUENESS OF THE BOOK

1. It has **no traditional introduction** (from whom, to whom).

2. It has **no personal greetings or closing message.**

There is **no mention** made of personal **names.**

The **only** NT Epistles which do not include the name of the author are **Hebrews** and **I John.**

The centrality of Jesus.

(**“Know”** used 27 times)

The **gnostic heresy of the first century forms the background for I John and the Gospel of John.**

AUTHOR

A. The authorship of I John is part of the debate over the authorship of the Johannine Corpus —

the Gospel, I John, II John, III John and Revelation.

B. There are two basic positions

1. Traditional

a. Tradition was unanimous among the early Church fathers that John, the beloved Apostle, was the author of I John

b. Summary of early church evidence

(1) St Clement of Rome (A.D. 90) makes allusions to I John

(2) St Polycarp of Smyrna, Philippians 7 (A.D. 110-140) quotes I John

(3) St Justin Martyr's, Dialogue 123:9 (A.D. 150-160) quotes I John

(4) Allusions to I John are made in the writings of

(a) St Ignatius of Antioch (date of his writings are uncertain but in early A.D. 100's)

(b) Papias of Hierapolis (born between A.D. 50-60 and martyred about A.D. 155)

(5) St Irenaeus of Lyons (A.D. 130-202)

attributes I John to the Apostle John.

Tertullian, an early apologist who wrote 50 books against heretics, often quoted I John

(6) Other early writings which attribute authorship to John the Apostle are Clement, Origen and Dionysius all three of Alexandria, the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 180-200) and Eusebius (third century).

(7) St Jerome (second half of fourth century) affirmed John's authorship but admitted that it was denied by some in his day.

(8) Theodore of Mopsuestia, Bishop of Antioch from A.D. 392-428, denied John's authorship.

What we do know about John the Apostle?

- (1) He was the son of **Zebedee** and **Salome**
- (2) He was a **fisherman** on the Sea of Galilee with his **brother**, James (possibly owned several boats)
- (3) Apparently he was **wealthy** because he had:
 - (a) hired servants (cf. Mark 1:20)
 - (b) several boats
- (4) St John had **access** to the High Priest's home in Jerusalem, which shows he was a person of some renown (cf. John 18:15-16)

(5) It was St John in whose care St Mary, the **Theotokos, was committed**

(6) Early Church tradition unanimously testified that St John **outlived all of the other Apostles, and after the dormition of St Mary in Jerusalem he moved to Asia Minor and settled in **Ephesus**, the largest city in that area.**

From this city he was **exiled to the Island of Patmos (just off the coast) and was later **released** and **returned** to Ephesus (Eusebius quotes St Polycarp, St Papias and St Irenaeus).**

DATE

We are talking about some **time during the close of the first century.**

This would give time for the development of the gnostic false theological/philosophical systems and also would fit into the terminology of I John (“**little children**”), which seems to imply an older man talking to a younger group of believers.

St Jerome says **John lived 68 years after Jesus' crucifixion.**

This seems to fit with this tradition.

RECIPIENTS

A. Tradition asserts that this Book was written to the **Roman Province of Asia Minor**, with Ephesus being its major metropolitan area.

B. The Epistle seems to have been sent to a **specific group** of churches in Asia Minor which were experiencing **a problem with false teachers** (like Colossians and Ephesians), specifically **Docetic Gnostics** who denied the **humanity** of Christ, but affirmed His deity.

C. St Augustine (fourth century) says it was written to the Parthians (Babylon).

He is followed by Cassiodorus (early sixth century).

This probably came from the confusion of the phrase “the elect lady,” and the phrase, “she who is in Babylon,” which are used in I Peter 5:13 and II John 1.

D. The Muratorian Fragment, an early canonical list of NT books written between A.D. 180-200 in Rome, asserts that this Epistle was written “after the exhortation of his fellow disciples and bishops.”

The First Epistle of St John

Ch. 1-3

Ch. 4-5

5:13-21

**Right
Behavior**

**Right
Believe**

**Right
Reward**

Orthopraxy

Orthodoxy

ORTHODOXY
(beliefs)



ORTHOPRAXY
(practice)

ORTHOPATHY
(feelings)

I. Introduction—1:1-4

II. The tests of true fellowship

God is light—1:5-2:29

A. Obedience—1:5-2:6 ("saying" vs. "doing")

B. Love—2:7-17

C. Truth—2:18-29

III. The tests of true sonship

God is love—chapters 3-5

A. Obedience— 3

B. Love— 4

C. Truth— 5

1 John 1:1–2:2 – *Communion.*

1 John 2:3-11 – *Commandments.*

1 John 2:12-27 – *Conflicts.*

1 John 3 – *Contrasts.*

1 John 4:1-6 – *Caution.*

1 John 4:7–5:3 – *Charity.*

1 John 5:4-21 – *Conquering.*



FATHERLY INSTRUCTION TO “DEAR CHILDREN”

- ❖ Seven Reasons why this Epistle written.
- 1:3, 4, 2:1, 13-17, 21-24, 26, 5:13

- ❖ Seven Tests of true Christian life:
- 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 6, 9, 4:20.

❖ **Seven Reasons why this epistle written.**

- 1:3, 4, 2:1, 13-17, 21-24, 26, 5:13

“That which we have seen and heard **we declare to you**, that you also may have fellowship with us.”

“And these things **we write to you** that your joy may be full.”

“My little children, these things **I write to you**, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

“I write to you, fathers,

**Because you have known Him *who*
is from the beginning.**

I write to you, young men,

**Because you have overcome the
wicked one.**

I write to you, little children,

**Because you have known the
Father.”**

“I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

²² Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.”

“These things **I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you.”**

“These things **I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

❖ Seven Reasons why this epistle written.

- 1:3, 4, 2:1, 13-17, 21-24, 26, 5:13

الذي رأيناه و سمعناه **نخبركم به** لكي يكون لكم ايضا شركة معنا

و **نكتب اليكم** هذا لكي يكون فرحكم كاملا

اكتب اليكم هذا لكي لا تخطئوا و ان اخطأ احد فلنا شفيع عند الاب
يسوع المسيح البار

اكتب اليكم ايها الاباء لأنكم قد عرفتم الذي من البدء
اكتب اليكم ايها الاحداث لأنكم قد غلبتم الشرير
اكتب اليكم ايها الاولاد لأنكم قد عرفتم الاب

لم اكتب اليكم لأنكم لستم تعلمون الحق بل لأنكم تعلمونه و
ان كل كذب ليس من الحق 22 من هو الكذاب الا الذي
ينكر ان يسوع هو المسيح هذا هو ضد المسيح الذي ينكر
الاب و الابن 23 كل من ينكر الابن ليس له الاب ايضا و
من يعترف بالابن فله الاب ايضا 24 اما انتم فما
سمعتموه من البدء فليثبت اذا فيكم ان ثبت فيكم ما
سمعتموه من البدء فانتهم ايضا تثبتون في الابن و في الاب

كتبت اليكم هذا عن الذين يضلونكم

كتبت هذا اليكم انتم المؤمنين باسم ابن الله لكي تعلموا ان
لكم حياة ابدية و لكي تؤمنوا باسم ابن الله

❖ Seven Tests of true Christian life:

- 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 6, 9, 4:20.

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

“He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”

“He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.”

“If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar.”

❖ Seven Tests of true Christian life:

- 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 6, 9, 4:20.

ان قلنا ان لنا شركة معه و سلطنا في الظلمة نكذب و لسنا
نعمل الحق

ان قلنا انه ليس لنا خطية نضل انفسنا و ليس الحق فينا

ان قلنا اننا لم نخطئ نجعله كاذبا و كلمته ليست فينا

من قال قد عرفته و هو لا يحفظ وصاياهم فهو كاذب و ليس
الحق فيه

من قال انه ثابت فيه ينبغي انه كما سلك ذاك هكذا
يسلك هو ايضا

من قال انه في النور و هو يبغض اخاه فهو الى الان
في الظلمة

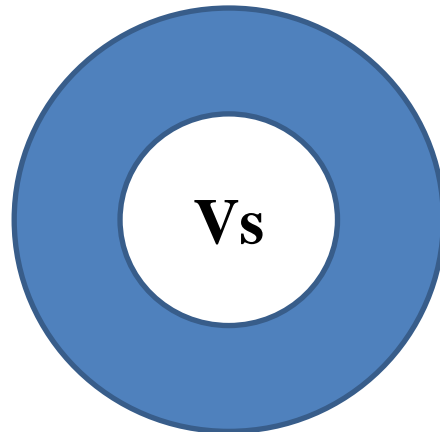
ان قال احد اني احب الله و ابغض اخاه فهو كاذب
لان من لا يحب اخاه الذي ابصره كيف يقدر ان يحب
الله الذي لم يبصره

St John writes in black and white (dualistic, contrast) terms.

Structured literary dualism is both **verbal** (light versus dark) and **stylistic** (a negative statement followed by a positive one).

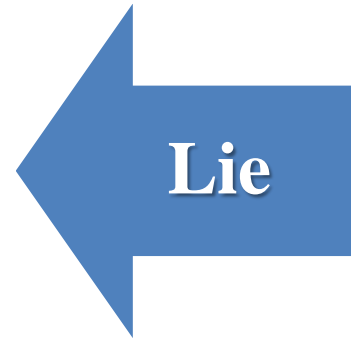
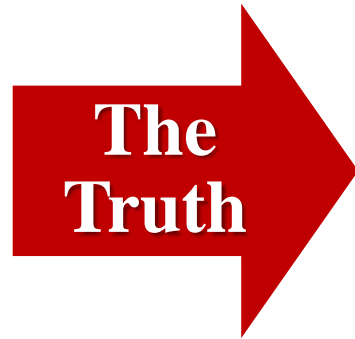
This is different from the Gospel of John, which employs **a vertical dualism** (from above versus from below).

"Saying"



"Doing"

Contrast:



2:21



1:5

2:10



2:9

**The love
of the
Father**

**If anyone
loves the
world**

2:15

**Who does the
will of God
abides
forever**

**The world
is passing
away**

2:17

2:23

**He who
acknowledges**

**He who
denies**

2:22

3:7

**He who
practices
righteousness**

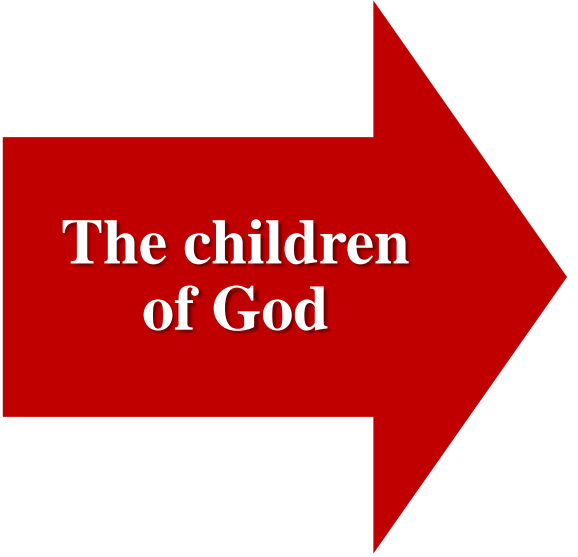
**Whoever
commits
sin**

3:4

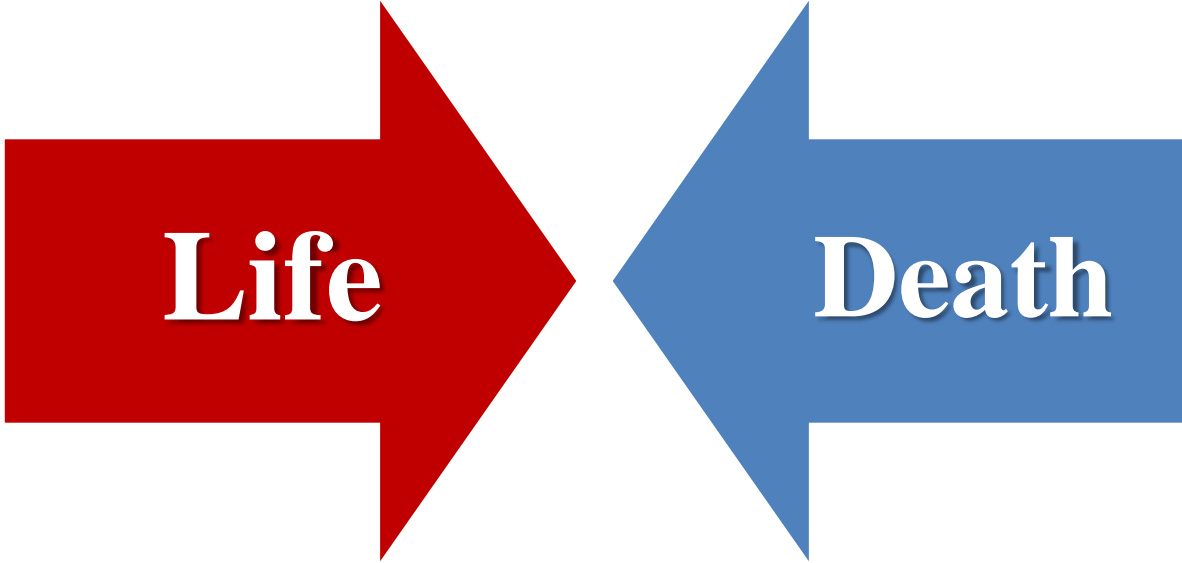
3:7



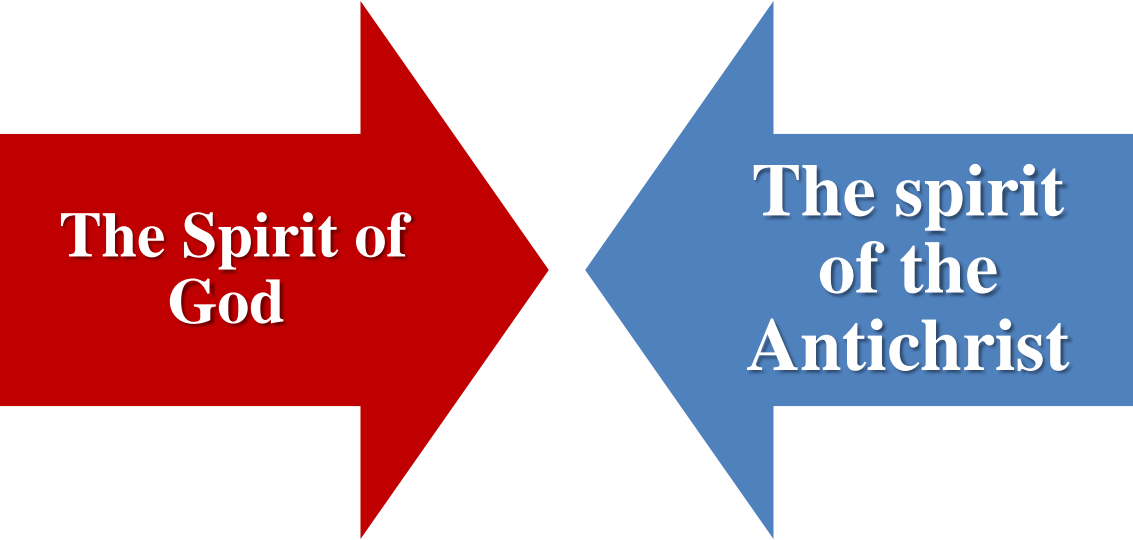
3:4



3:10



3:14



4:2

4:3



**The spirit
of truth**



**The spirit
of error**

4:6



**We are of
God**



**They are of
the world**

4:6

4:5

God is Light

• الله نور (1:5)

God is Righteous

• ذاك بار (3:7)

God is Omniscient

• يعلم كل شيء (3:20)

God is love

• الله محبة (4:7-11)

God is Invisible

• الله لم ينظره احد قط (4:12)

God is Life

• هذه الحياة هي في ابنه (5:11)

God is Truth

• من اجل الحق الذي يثبت فينا و سيكون معنا الى الابد (2John 2)

God is Good

• من يصنع الخير هو من الله (3John 11)

The Fellowship (Kononia):

“That you also may have **fellowship**
with us;
and truly our **fellowship** is with the
Father and with His Son Jesus
Christ.”

الذي رأيناه و سمعناه نخبركم به لكي يكون لكم
ايضا شركة معنا و اما شركتنا نحن فهي مع الاب و
مع ابنه يسوع المسيح

(1:3)

The Requirements for the Fellowship:

- 1- We walk in light: (1:6-7).**
- 2- We know our sins: (1:8).**
- 3- We confess our sins: (1:9).**
- 4- We keep His commandments:
(2:3-8- 5:2-3).**
- 5- We abide in Him: (2:28)**
 - A- Baptism: (Gal. 3:25)**
 - B- Chrismation (2:20,27)**
 - C- The Holy Eucharist:
(John 6:56)**

D- “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” (2:6)

6- We love each other: (3:17).

The Enemies of the Fellowship:

The Devil

The Lusts of the world

The Lusts of the flesh

Sin

St John's audience had been hearing many **false teachings about sin.**

Some false teachers said that sin **didn't affect a person's relationship** with God at all.

Some said that **the sinful nature was dead** and people could become **completely sinless.**

Others **denied the existence of sin** altogether.

St John began his epistle by attacking all those ideas.

Sin is **real, and all people **sin**.**

God does distinguish between those **who persistently sin and those who don't (1:6, 7).**

The bottom line is: All Christians must deal with sin.

If we were capable of living without sin, then Jesus would not have needed to die as the "sacrifice**" for our sins**

and for the sins of all the world (2:2).

We would not need confession, and we would not need Christ.

In reality, all of us are guilty before God and need to be purified from sin.

Fortunately, God has made a way.

If we confess our sins, God is *faithful* and *just* and will *forgive* us and *cleanse* us (1:9).

Omitting

NU-Text and M-Text omit the words from *in heaven* (verse 7) through *on earth* (verse 8).

Only *four or five very late* manuscripts contain these words in Greek.

But omitting it does not affect the teaching at all.





The Second Epistle of St John

INTRODUCTION

II John deals with the **problem of heretical, itinerant (traveling) preachers,** while **III John** deals with the admonition **to help itinerant Christian preachers.**

**“Whoever transgresses and does not
abide in the doctrine of Christ does not
have God.**

**He who abides in the doctrine of Christ
has both the Father and the Son.” (9)**

**كل من تعدى و لم يثبت في تعليم المسيح فليس له الله و
من يثبت في تعليم المسيح فهذا له الاب و الابن جميعا
(9)**

Verse 1 and 13

The beginning and the end, use identical terminology:

The children of your
elect sister greet you.

To the elect lady
and her children

يسلم عليك اولاد اختك
المختارة

الشيخ الى كيرية المختارة
و الى اولادها

The Lord (**kyrios**), and thus the Church is easily called “**kyria**,” the feminine of kyrios.

(St Clement of Alexandria, Hilary of Arles)

The elect lady was a **church**.

The **Elder**

The **Presbyter**

It means more than **“old man.”**

In the NT there is not always a distinction between **bishops** and presbyters.

Neither the lady's children nor her nephews (verse 13) are mentioned by personal names;
and the pronoun **“you”** in verses 8, 10, and 12 is **plural**.

It is a short Epistle fits in **one papyrus sheet**.

Theme:

Truth

“whom I love in truth.”

انا احبهم بالحق

“but also all those who have known the truth”

جميع الذين قد عرفوا الحق

(v. 1)

“because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever”

من اجل الحق الذي يثبت فينا و سيكون معنا الى الابد

(v. 2)

**Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you
from God the Father and from the Lord
Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth
and love.**

معكم نعمة و رحمة و سلام من الله الاب و من الرب يسوع
المسيح ابن الاب بالحق و المحبة

(v. 3)

**I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of
your children walking in truth**

فرحت جدا لأني وجدت من اولادك بعضا سالكين في الحق

(v. 4)

The polarity between believers and deceivers.

There are those who know the truth, in whom it abides, and who walk in the truth with love (1-6).

And there are the others, antichrists, who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh (7).

Outline

Introduction (1-3)

Thanksgiving (4)

Body (5-11)

Conclusion (12-13)

Outline

Benediction (1-3)

- **Love in truth**

Pleading (4-6)

- **Walk in truth - Practice the truth**

Beware (7-11)

- **Abides in truth - Protecting the truth**

Farewell (12-13)

- **Joy is the fruit of kononia.**

Outline

I. Introduction

- **2 John 1-3**

II. Practicing the truth

- **2 John 4-6**

III. Protecting the truth

- **2 John 7-11**

IV. Conclusion

- **2 John 12-13**

***The Apostle's
joy
(v. 4)***

***The
Apostle's
appeal
(vv. 5-6)***

***The
Apostle's
argument
(v. 4)***

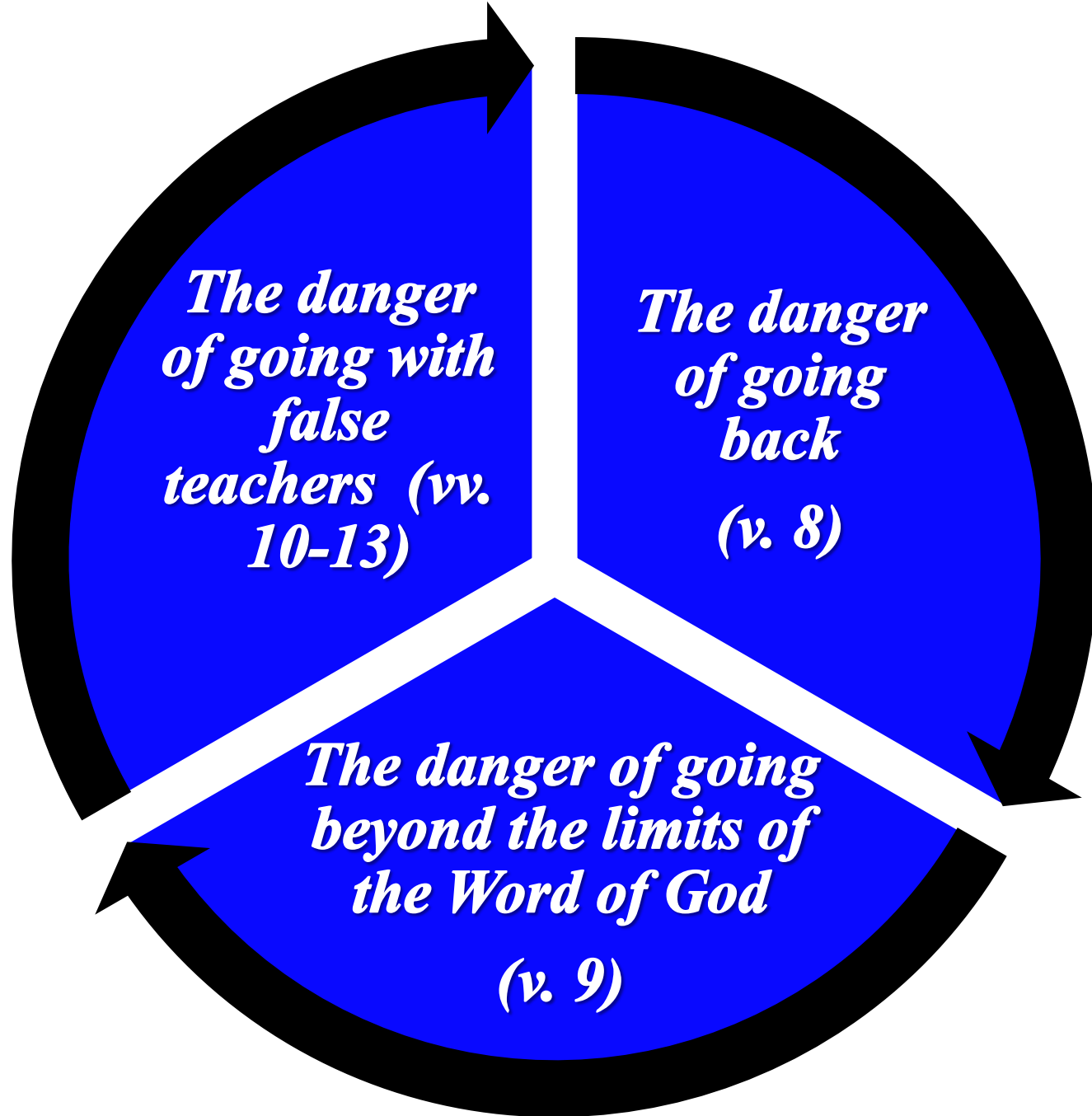
The Story:

When St John left a public bath because of a gnostic heretic Cerinthus.

“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.”

الرجل المبتدع بعد الانذار مرة و مرتين اعرض عنه 11
عالمًا ان مثل هذا قد انحرف و هو يخطئ محكوما عليه
من نفسه

(Titus 3:10-11)



*The danger
of going with
false
teachers (vv.
10-13)*

*The danger
of going
back
(v. 8)*

*The danger of going
beyond the limits of
the Word of God
(v. 9)*

Tradition:

“Having many things to write to you, I did not wish *to do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.”

اذ كان لي كثير لأكتب اليكم لم ارد ان يكون بورق و حبر
لأني ارجو ان اتي اليكم و اتكلم فما لقم لكي يكون فرحنا
كاملا

(v. 12)

He was concerned that this godly Lady not permit anything false to come into her house

ان كان احد ياتيكم و لا يجيء بهذا التعليم فلا تقبلوه في البيت و لا
تقولوا له سلام

(2 John 10) or into the assembly.

The dominant feelings in this little epistle are those of **friendship and **joy**, even though these are mixed with **concern** and **warning**.**

If you and I are to keep our homes true to Christ, then we must have the same characteristics as this family to which St John wrote.





The Third Epistle of St John

There are three different men specifically named in III John:

1. Gaius (a godly man in the recipient church)

a. There are three Gaius's mentioned in other parts of the Bible: **Gaius of**

Macedonia,

Acts 19:29; **Gaius of Derbe, Acts 20:4; and**

****Gaius of Corinth,** Rom. 16:23; I Cor. 1:14.**

b. "Apostolic Constitutions" list the

Gaius of III John as the **Bishop of**

****Pergamum,** appointed by St John.**

2. Diotrephes (a godless trouble-maker in the recipient church)

a. This is the only mention of this man in the NT. His name is a very rare name which means “nursed of Zeus.” How ironic it is that man named after “Zeus” would be against travelers when “Zeus” was the “protector of travelers.”

b. His attitude is exposed in verses 9-10.

3. Demetrius (the bearer of St John's Epistle to this local church)

a. Apparently he is one of the traveling missionaries and the bearer of the Epistle from the Apostle in Ephesus.

b. “The Apostolic Constitutions**” lists Demetrius as the **Bishop of Philadelphia**, who was appointed by the Apostle John.**

**Genuine leadership vs.
false leadership**

**It exhorts the Church to
persevere in the true faith
which She has received.**

**“I have no greater joy than to
hear that my children walk in
truth.”**

(3 John 4)

**ليس لي فرح اعظم من هذا ان اسمع عن
اولادي انهم يسلكون بالحق**

Truth

Vv. 1, 3, 4, 8, 12

I. Gaius, a beloved believer

- 3 John 1-8

II. Diotrephes, a proud believer

- 3 John 9-10

III. Demetrius, an exemplary believer

- 3 John 11-12

IV. Conclusion

- 3 John 13-14

The Third Epistle of St John

**Commendation
of Gaius
(5-8)**

**Condemnation
of Diotrephes
(9-11)**

**Recommendation
of Demetrius
(12)**

Gaius

- **Walk in truth**

Diotrephes

- loves to have the preeminence
 - **Pride**

Demetrius

- **has a good testimony from all**

1–8

- **The hospitable Gaius**

9–12

- **Good and bad in the Church**

13–15

- **Farewell greetings**

Similarities between 2 John & 3 John

“Having many things to write to you, I did not wish *to do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.”

“I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; ¹⁴ but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.”

اذ كان لي كثير لأكتب اليكم لم ارد
ان يكون بورق و حبر لأنني ارجو
ان اتي اليكم و اتكلم فما لفم لكي
يكون فرحنا كاملا

(2 John 12)

و كان لي كثير لأكتبه لكنني لست
اريد ان اكتب اليك بحبر و قلم 14
و لكنني ارجو ان اراك عن قريب
فنتكلم فما لفم

(3 John 13-14)

How to know False Prophets

True Prophet	False Prophet
Can stay at your house for 3 days at the most.	Stays for more than 3 days at your house.
Doesn't ask for money.	Asks for money.
Judge his behavior- if good then he is a true prophet.	Judge his behavior- if bad then he is a false prophet.



The Samaritan woman said *“Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet”* based on Christ's behavior.

The blind man said to the Pharisees *“He is a prophet”* based on Christ's behavior when they were questioning him.

