

Chapter Summary: 2 & 3 John

Traveling teachers often visited the communities of Jesus' followers throughout the Roman world, but some of these teachers brought a different message about Jesus than was originally shared. They taught that He hadn't come to earth in a real body. As a result, some churches were now refusing to receive the teachers who taught the true message about Jesus. John responds to these issues by writing two brief letters to the churches in the same area as those addressed in the letter known as 1 John.

The author refers to himself as "the elder." However, it's clear from the language, style, and themes that the author is the same as the author of the Gospel of John and 1 John, traditionally identified as John the apostle.

In the letter known as 2 John, the apostle addresses a "lady" and her "children," most likely referring metaphorically to one of the churches and the believers in it. John has just received a visit from some of them and is delighted to learn that they are faithfully following the truth of the gospel. But, apparently, they also reported that certain false teachers had arrived, expecting to receive lodging, meals, and perhaps even funds to get them to their next destination. John strictly warns the church not to support or encourage those who do not teach accurately about Christ.

The letter known as 3 John is addressed to a man named Gaius, presumably in a different church, who had recently hosted some of the true teachers in his home. Those teachers reported this to John, who writes to thank Gaius and encourage him to continue doing this good work. Unfortunately, a leader named Diotrephes is refusing to host the true teachers and is forcing anyone who supports them to leave the church. John urges Gaius not to let this bad example influence him but rather to continue showing hospitality to those faithful traveling teachers.

In both letters, John expresses his hope to see the recipients soon. Even though John has much more to say, these letters are brief because he wants to share his message in person. He's doing all he can to ensure that the resources of the churches go to support only those who are "following the truth."