

I John, 2 John, 3 John and Jude III
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
June 23, 2007

On Pentecost, we discussed the early origins of the Christian Church and the Fairview Church and the relationships to the earlier Israelite holy day of Shavuot.

Within the first century, we find that the early Christian Church was already having challenges. 1 John was written around 85-90 AD – probably from Ephesus.

John's purpose in writing was to expose the heresy of the false teachers.

Notice there is no dedication or salutation such as is found in other epistles. This indicates it was probably a circular letter – John wrote it to be shared with all churches.

The main heresy being taught was Gnosticism = intuitive knowledge of spiritual manners.

1 John 5

- 1 ¶ Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.
- 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.
- 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.
 - Reference: **Matthew 11** 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
 - Reference: **Matthew 23**
 - 1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,
 - 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.
 - 3 "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.
 - 4 "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
- 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.
- 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- 6 ¶ This is He who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.
- 7 For there are three that bear witness (**added in the 16th century = in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.**
- **8 And there are three that bear witness on earth**): the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.
- 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.

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- 10 ¶ He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.
- 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
- 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.
- 13 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.
- 14 ¶ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything *according to His will*, He hears us.
- Our requests must be according to His will.
- 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.
- 16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.
 - **Matthew 12**
 - 31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.
- 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and *there is sin not leading to death*.
- 18 ¶ We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.
- After the resurrection, we will be incapable of sinning.
- 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.
 - Prior to the resurrection, we are susceptible to the influence of Satan and his demons.
- 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.
- 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.
 - Avoid anything that will take your focus away from God

2 John

Not a “circular letter” because it is addressed to a specific, though unnamed, person and sites her kin.

This epistle was most likely written shortly after 1 John – near 90 AD.

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John, here, is concerned with the relation of Christian truth to hospitality extended to those teachers traveling from church to church. Such hospitality was often abused. False teachers were creating confusion.

- 1 ¶ THE ELDER, To the elect (**chosen**) lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth,
- 2 because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:
- 3 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.
- 4 I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.
- 5 ¶ And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.
 - **John 13:**
 - 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
 - **John 15**
 - 12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
 - **Ephesians 5:**
 - 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.
 - **1 Peter 4:**
 - 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."
 - **1 John 2:**
 - 7 Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.
 - 8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.
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 - **3:11** For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,
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 - 23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.
- 6 This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.
 - **John 14**

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- 15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.
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- 21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."
- **John 15**
 - 10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.
- **1 John 5**
 - 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.
- 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.
 - Similar to 1 John's message.
 - **Matthew 24**
 - 4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.
 - **Revelation 12:**
 - 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
- 8 Look to yourselves, that we (**you**) do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.
 - **1 Corinthians 3**
 - 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
 - **Revelation 22**
 - 12 And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.
- 9 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.
- 10 ¶ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;
- 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.
 - John does not forbid common courtesy, but points out that giving hospitality to false teachers indicates sympathy with and support for their teachings.
 - In other words – don't encourage them.
 - **Romans 16:**
 - 17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.
 - **1 Corinthians 5:**

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- 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.
- **2 Timothy 3:**
 - 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
 - 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,
 - 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
 - 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!
- **Titus 3:**
 - 9 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.
 - 10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,
- 12 ¶ 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.
- 13 The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

3 John

Probably written near the same time as 2 John – 90 AD – near the end of John’s life.

In contrast to 2 John, this letter addresses problems with genuine teachers of the truth – encouraging hospitality. Diotrephes opposed the authority of John and refused hospitality to the traveling missionaries and prohibited others from entertaining them, excommunicating them when they did.

- 1 ¶ THE ELDER, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:
- 2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.
- 3 ¶ For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth.
- 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
- 5 Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and (**especially**) for strangers,
- 6 who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well,
- 7 because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles.
- 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.
 - Three reasons for supporting the missionaries:

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- They are serving Christ
- To avoid all suspicion of unworthy motives in their ministry, they have refused remuneration from those to whom they ministered
- Those who support missionaries share in their work of the gospel
- 9 ¶ I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.
 - Some suppose Diotrephes might have destroyed the referenced letter.
- 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.
- 11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.
- 12 ¶ Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.
- 13 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.

Jude 1:

Jude was likely another half-brother of Jesus. Some believe it was Judas, the son of James – an apostle – although the introduction says “brother of James”. He wrote this letter, most likely, some time between 65 and 80 AD. Once again, like 1, 2 and 3 John and 1 and 2 Peter, the writer is addressing false teachers in the church.

- 1 ¶ Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:
- 2 Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.
- 3 ¶ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.
- 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.
 - **Numbers 26**
 - 64 But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai.

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- 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;
 - **1 Enoch** (not a canonized book of the Bible) = angels descended and cohabited with women who lived before the flood – they are now confined
 - **Genesis 6**
 - 1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,
 - 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.
 - **2 Peter 2**
 - 4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;
- 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
- 8 ¶ Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.
- 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending (**arguing**) with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"
 - Michael's confrontation with the devil is not in the Bible, but was originally in a Jewish work entitled *The Testament (or The Assumption) of Moses*.
 - There was a contention that Moses was not worthy of Michael's burial because he had murdered an Egyptian
 - **Deuteronomy 34.**
 - 5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.
 - 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.
- 10 But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.
- 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.
 - Cain = Genesis 4
 - Balaam = Numbers 22-24
 - Korah = Numbers 16
- 12 These are spots (**stains or hidden reefs – stumbling blocks**) in your love feasts (**fellowship meals of early Christians**), while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water (**full of unfulfilled**

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- promises**), carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;
- **Matthew 15**
 - 13 But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.
 - **John 15**
 - 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
 - 13 raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.
 - 14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,
 - 15 ¶ "to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."
 - Jude is quoting from 1 Enoch again
 - Enoch prophesied of the 2nd coming of Christ
 - 16 These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.
 - 17 But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:
 - 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.
 - 19 These are sensual (**soulish or worldly**) persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.
 - 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
 - 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.
 - 22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction;
 - 23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.
 - 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
 - 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

Summary

John's purpose in writing 1 John was to expose the heresy of the false teachers. Notice there is no dedication or salutation such as is found in other epistles. This indicates it was probably a circular letter – John wrote it to be shared with all churches.

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2 John was not a “circular letter” because it is addressed to a specific, though unnamed, person and sites her kin. John, here, is concerned with the relation of Christian truth to hospitality extended to those teachers traveling from church to church. Such hospitality was often abused. False teachers were creating confusion.

3 John, in contrast to 2 John, addresses problems with genuine teachers of the truth – encouraging hospitality.

Jude is also addressing false teachers in the church.

From these 3 epistles, we learn that, within 60 years of Christ’s crucifixion, false teachers were already infiltrating the church. These letters are appropriate to us today as we attempt to fight similar challenges.