

WEEK 24

1st John discussion and 2nd and 3rd John background

1st John discussion

Theme

Vander Laan: whoever is in Jesus must walk as Jesus walked

Search the Scriptures: three marks of a true knowledge of and fellowship with God:

righteousness of life, brotherly love, faith in Jesus as God incarnate

Bible discussion questions

What did you think was the theme of 1st John ?

What picture do you have of the church/believers after reading 1st John ?

How is that the same/ different from our experience today?

Which passages encouraged you? Which passages challenged you?

Gnostics believed that divine spirits would never join with an earthly body—that would be

like stepping down many notches on the “spiritual scale.” How does John begin

to repudiate the Gnostics right in the first verse?

heard, seen, looked at , touched

Gnostics also believed that spiritual knowledge was infinitely more important than a holy

life. How does John address that teaching in 1:5-2:2?

How does he point out one of the basic problems with gnosticism in 2:3-6?

If how you live doesn't matter, then why did Jesus teach that it does matter?

Jesus commands us to live in a holy way.

What is the standard by which we should gauge our lives? 2:6 Be like the Rabbi

How does how we treat our brothers reflect our spiritual state? 2:9-11

What does it mean to “love the world” (2:15-17) and why shouldn't we do it?

“The world is that organized system headed by Satan that leaves God out and is a

rival to Him.” Ryrie

What does John teach about the Antichrist/antichrists in 2:18-27?

What is our relationship to God? 3:1

How does that relationship affect our relationship with the world? 3:1

What is our hope, mentioned in 3:2? How should this hope affect us? 3:3

What should the life of a child of God look like? 3:4-15

How do we learn about what love looks like? 3:16 look at Jesus and his example

How is that love made clear to others? 3:17-18

What is God’s primary command to all people? 3:23

How can they know true teachers from false Gnostic teachers, in 4:1-3?

Despite all this conflict, how can they have confidence that their mission won’t fail? 4:4

What picture does he give in 4:9-10 of true love?

How do we show an invisible God to the world? 4:12

What does 4:17-18 say about fear of judgment?

We can show God’s love to others by loving them. How can we show God how we

love Him? 5:3

How does this compare to trying to follow the law?

What is our victory over this anti-God world system? 5:4-5

What are three of the ways God has testified about his son? 5:6-9

visible giving of the Spirit to those who believe in him (spirit)

visible dove and audible voice at his baptism (water)

visible signs of God’s wrath and judgment at his death (darkness, earthquake,

torn curtain in Temple) (blood)

Isn’t this the opposite of Gnostic teaching!

How many ways are there to have a relationship with God? 5:11-12

Many people are unsure about whether they will get into heaven. What does John say in 5:13?

Who protects us from evil in the world? 5:18

What are the tests given on how can we tell a false teacher?

1:6-7 lifestyle of "darkness"

1:10 claim haven't sinned

2:4-6 doesn't do what God commands, or walk as Jesus did

2:9 hates his brother

2:15 loves the world

2:22 denies that Jesus is the Christ (how were they in the church?!)

2:29 does not do what is right

3:3 does not purify himself

3:6-10 lifestyle of sin/ unrighteousness/ wrong/hating his brother

3:24 doesn't obey his commands

4:2-3 does not acknowledge that Jesus came in the flesh

4:7-8 doesn't love

4:15 does not acknowledge Jesus is Son of God

4:20-21 hates his brother

5:3 doesn't obey his commandments

How do you see the teaching about being LIKE your Rabbi reflected in this letter?

2:6 walk as Jesus did

3:2-3 we shall be like him; purify ourselves, just as he is pure

3:7-8 righteous as he is righteous

3:16 Jesus laid down his life for us; we should lay down our lives for our brothers

4:17 in this world we are like him

2nd John background

Timeline

- 79 Titus becomes emperor
- 81 Domitian becomes emperor
- 90 1 John – John is bishop of Ephesus
- 90 2 John

Who wrote it? John

Who was John?

brother of James the apostle (not the letter writer), son of Zebedee

Called the disciple “whom Jesus loved”—part of the inner circle of three that Jesus kept closest to him (James, Peter, and John)

Jesus called James and John the “sons of thunder” which would indicate a level of zeal and intensity we may not always associate with the “apostle of love”

Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, and Salome (one of the women who was at the crucifixion and then went to the empty tomb on Easter morning) all came from the same small fishing village in Galilee: Bethsaida, a village of probably only a few hundred people, and 8-10 extended families.

Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum were a triangle of towns where the idea of being a disciple was the strongest—a very devout area

Their world revolved around the synagogue, which was a meeting place as well as a sacred place. Visiting rabbis would teach here, debate may occur.

John was a fisherman—again this says that he didn’t “make it” into a rabbi’s school as a disciple

He was a disciple of John the Baptist before Christ called him.

Jesus entrusts the care of his mother, Mary, to John at His crucifixion—it may be that

he stayed in Judea to complete this charge

He lived to be about 100 years old!

Apostle John lived in Ephesus before (60's or 70's) and after his Patmos exile, and died there.

He was the bishop of the Ephesian church.

About the epistle

Written soon after 1st John.

There were no seminaries--John was training converts to be teachers and pastors, and sending them out among the churches.

About the church

unsure of the destination of this letter

“chosen lady” may be a way of designating a particular church, and “chosen sister” may be a different church

OR “chosen lady” may be an individual Christian and her family, including her sister.

Gnosticism was making headway in the churches.

spiritual life was the only important thing, it didn't matter what your flesh did

Scripture can only be understood by a select few

incarnation isn't believable, because deity would never unite itself with anything material like a body.

there is no resurrection of the flesh, because material things are “bad” and

spiritual things are “good”

Other info

1:9 runs ahead—claims a knowledge superior to God's revelation

3rd John background

Timeline

90 1 John – John is bishop of Ephesus

90 2 John

90 3 John—carried by Demetrius to Gaius

About the epistle

a personal letter addressed to Gaius, in Corinth

a church met in his home

he had given hospitality to some traveling teachers

probably delivered by Demetrius, who may have been a traveling teacher

There were no seminaries--John was training converts to be teachers and pastors, and sending them out among the churches.

About the church

problems with some of the traveling teachers

Diotrephes, a self-assertive leader in one of the other Corinthian churches, refused to receive the teachers, who apparently were sent by John

Corinth was a wealthy commercial port city (remember the “Las Vegas” of the Empire)

Greek, Roman, and Asian population population ~ 400,000

Only Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria were larger

Aphrodite/Venus was the principal deity of Corinth

Some believers were having trouble adapting to moral living.

Believers had no central meeting place; they met in homes, halls, where ever they could;

met in Gaius’s house

So you had many small congregations, each with their own leadership.

Difficult passages

v. 7 no help from the pagans

the brothers wouldn't take any help from those who weren't believers, so it wouldn't appear that they were "selling" the gospel

After the epistle

Domitian persecutes Christians, demands worship as a god, or be executed

95 John banished to Patmos (?awaiting execution)

97 Timothy is martyred, stoned by a crowd in Ephesus for opposing festival of Dionysius

? John dies in Ephesus, at about age 100