

STEP 50

Might I say that it takes clean water to clean a floor, you cannot clean a floor with dirty water. You cannot clean a dirty soul with a sin-cursed offering.

VI- Know That We Have Passed from Death to Life.

I Jn 3:14-15 "We KNOW that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye KNOW that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Again I remind us that one of the purposes of *I John* is that we might have assurance of our salvation. When we remember that the Word of God teaches us that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. (see *Eph 2:1,5*) We can know that are alive is that we have passed from death into life.

VII- Know He Hears Our Prayers.

I Jn 5:15 "And if we KNOW that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we KNOW that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

The knowledge that God hears our prayers is a comfort to us both in good times and bad. God is not a God that does not hear nor care but one who is a pray away.

Application to Life's Steps:

- 1- We can know that we saved before we die. Notice especially *I John 5:13*.
- 2- We know the Holy Spirit give assurance, truth and guidance.
- 3- The knowledge that we will be like Him is a comfort.
- 4- The fact He hears our prayers and petitions is an assurance for our walk in life.

Retracing our Steps:

- 1- Who wrote the books of I John?

- 2- What are the key words of I John?

- 3- What are the seven things given in our study that we can and need to know. List them below.

The Letters to the Churches: The Four Small Books of the New Testament
II John; III John; Jude; Philemon

II John

II John is the smallest book in the entire Bible. Lets look at the author, the place and time of the writing, the recipient of the letter as well as the purpose for which it was written.

Author:

1:1 "The Elder" We have a very personal letter here from the Elder John the Apostle. The apostle John wrote 5 books in the New Testament, second only to the Apostle Paul. He wrote, John the Gospel, The three epistles of I John, II John, and III John as well as the Revelation.

"The Greek word for 'elder' is presbuteros (presbyter), and it has a twofold meaning. I can mean a senior citizen, referring to age, or it can be a title, referring to an office in the church, a minister or teacher. I am sure that John is primarily calling himself an elder, speaking of his office in the church. I think he also infers the fact that he is now an old man." (J.V. McGee, *Thru the Bible*, p. 826)

In the *Dake Annotated Bible* Finis Dake says John was an elder for three reasons. By title, by age, and "By Seniority, both as a Christian and as an apostle." He is supposed to have been the oldest of the apostles, to have more years of Christian experience and have been the only one to die a natural death.

Place and Time of Writing:

There are a variety of dates given for the year of the writing of this epistle from 90-100 A.D. John is probably 90+ years old by the time of this writing. We

can safely say that it is one of the last works written in the New Testament.

John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos during the writing of the Revelation. Church tradition says that after he was released he returned to the city of Ephesus and was pastor of the churches.

The Recipient of the Letter:

1:1 "unto the elect lady and her children..." The word translated **elect** is the word *electa*.

The two basic thoughts on who this letter is addressed to are it is addressed to a particular person and her children and that the reason why John did not name her is to prevent persecution of her by the Roman authorities who viewed Christianity as an unlawful religion. Others see this letter as being written to a church in the days of John. J.V. McGee says, "The word *electa* could be the name of a prominent woman in the church, or it could be the local church itself that John has in mind. 'Her children' could be either the physical children of the woman or the spiritual children of the church." (J.V. McGee, *Thru the Bible*, p. 826)

The Purpose of the Letter:

Might I say that regardless of which of the thoughts regarding to whom this epistle is written is correct, of if they both are, this work contains some spiritual dynamite? This letter is very important today because the church seems to be crying out for love at the cost of truth and this letter teaches plainly that love should not be elevated above truth. John had written in the first

epistle, *I John*, a great deal about love. Lest he be misunderstood and the doctrine of love become so one sided that it accepted anything he writes this epistle. This points out the importance of understanding the whole scriptures on a subject and not just one verse out of context.

There is another key to understanding the grand purpose of this letter in the key word of the epistle, TRUTH. John is concerned with and credited for preservation of the truth concerning the gospel of Christ in the early church.

Let me offer the following outline for your personal study of truth in *II John*.

Outline:

The Truth About Love:

Rejoice In Those Who Walk in Truth

1:1-6

Reject Those Who Walk Not in Truth

1:7-11

Receive Those Who Come in Truth

1:12-13

III John

Four Men In The Church

III John 1-14

Third John was penned by the same John as *II John*. In *Third John* we see four men that we can look at to understand our Christian walk today.

I. The Elder, John the Apostle, was watchful of falsehood in the early church. (vs. 1-14)

Who is he? We find that Christ surnamed him and his brother James, "*Sons of Thunder*," in *Mk. 3:17*. He was vindictive toward a city of Samaritians that would not receive them. (*Luke 9:54*) He also was an

ambitious young man in *Mark 10:35-37* where he and James ask to sit on the right and left hand of Christ in His glory, his earthly kingdom is understood here.

He calls himself, "*The beloved*" or "*The one that Jesus loved*" in the gospel that he wrote. In fact he learned the lessons of love in the school of Christ. In *John 13:23* we find him lying on Christ breast at the Passover. He was the one that Christ trusted the watchcare of His mother, Mary to as he hung on the cross.

At the time of this epistle John is, "*The Elder*", the elder gentleman of the church, an apostle that has grown into the wise watchman of the church.

Here he writes to Gaius as a friend not as an apostle. He rejoiced over those who walked in the truth. (vv. 3-4) He rejoiced over Gaius because he had a reputation of walking in the truth. The brethren who testified of this were probably the traveling evangelists of the day that Gaius had help.

John also rejoiced over right treatment of other saints given by Gaius in verses 5-8. These men were spreading the gospel by giving of themselves and taking nothing of the Gentiles to whom they preached.

We see some of the spit and fire come out in John that he had in his younger days in verse 10 where he seems to be itching to get to the fight at hand with Diotrephes. He saw the wrong and did not bury his head in the sand nor straddle the fence, but stood against it. He wanted to take a hands on, eye to eye, approach to the trouble that was there in verse 14 where he says he hopes to see Gaius soon.

II. Gaius was a shining example of Christianity. (vv. 1-6)

We need to see who he was and what he stood for. We can state that Gaius was a shining example of Christianity for us all to mimic and imitate as evidenced in the first six verses of this short epistle. We see three things about him:

1- he was "**well-beloved**" by John according to verse **1**.

2- he was sound in his doctrine as seen in verses **1** and **3** where John says that he held to the truth.

3- he was known for supported the work of God with hospitality as seen in verse **6**.

Still who was he? Harold Willimington in *Willmington's Guide to the Bible* says. "There were at least three New Testament people by this name. One was from Corinth (Rom 16:23), one from Macedonia (Acts 19:29) and one from Derbe (Acts 20:4-5)." (*Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, p 536)

I personally believe that he was the one mentioned in **Romans 16:23** because it was said of this man named Gaius, "**Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, salutes you.**"

Regardless of who he was, we know that he was loved by John, because he stood for the truth and because of the way he treated others.

III. Diotrophes was an active opponent to the work of God. (vs. 9-10)

Diotrophes was in open and direct opposition to John and the traveling evangelist that came to teach in the church. (vs. 9-10) He was the one who was either going to have his way or no way. He was either going to run the church or ruin it. My friends may I say, God hates those who sow discord among the brethren. **Prov 6:16,19**

makes this very plain. Those who would tear down, and it takes only a few to destroy, cannot be pleasing to God.

Do we need reminded that the church has only one head according to **Ephesians 1:22**, the Lord Jesus and not Diotrophes or any men like him?

IV. Demetrius is obscure but not forgotten by God. (v.12)

The work of the church goes on sometimes unnoticed by anyone but God. Here Demetrius is obscure but not forgotten by God as seen in verse **12**. This is the only mention of Demetrius in scripture. We don't know anything about him, where he was from or what he did, other than what we find here in **Third John**. Still if we could have access to the record books of heaven, we might find many things done in Jesus name by him on file. You see friends, God has not forgotten those deeds done for Him to others. **I Cor. 3:13-14**

Even the most obscure things such as a cup of cold water will not go unrewarded. (See **Matthew 10:42**) In **Rev 22:12** I feel is a message to those who serve like Demetrius seemingly without reward, where Christ tells us, "**Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according to his work shall be.**" Friend the most important thing to God is that we, as stewards are found faithful.

Jude

Jude, as we saw also with James, was the half brother of Jesus. He stated his intended purpose was to write concerning the common faith **1:3**. He was lead by the Spirit to write

concerning the coming apostasy and false teachers.

He warned the church that false teachers had already crept in. **1:4.** He reminded them of God's judgment in the past. This was to remind tell them that these false teachers will be judged.

1:5 First he reminded them that judgment of God was on those who He had brought out of Egypt and then judged because of their unbelief.

1:6 On the angels which He has reserved in darkness until the great judgment day.

1:7-8 On Sodom and Gomorrha, which suffered eternal fire. They had defiled the flesh.

1:9-13 is found a strong denunciation of these apostates who are leading others astray. He compares them to waterless clouds, fruitless trees, foaming waves of shame, stars which are reserved for judgment.

One of the greatest verses in Jude is a prophetic verse. **1:14** tells us that Jesus will return with the church. He is coming back to judge those who have stood against Him. He reminded them that the Apostles told us that mockers would come in the last days. They would live a life of lust and not have the Spirit of God.

He next reminded them, and us that we need to strengthen our faith. We need to build our self up in prayer and keep ourselves in the love and mercy of God.

Jude then gives an exhortation for soul winning. He tells us to make a difference and pull some out of the fire. He states we should hate the spots of sin.

We have a praise break out in the last couple of verse. **1:24-25.**

Philemon

It has been said, reading the book of Philemon is like looking over Philemon's shoulder as he reads his personal mail. This is a very personal letter from the apostle Paul to a friend and brother in Christ. While it is a small book it have many different lessons for life.

We see a theme of restoration in this book. We can discern how to treat those who have wronged us in a Christian way from these pages as well as other themes.

For the sake of this study let's simply become familiar with this wonderful story.

The characters of the story are key to understanding this book. Philemon, to whom this letter is addressed, was a wealthy man who owned slaves. He was a believer in Christ. Some think that Paul had personally led him to the Lord. (see **1:19**) Paul knew this man to be a man of character and fair mindedness.

Onesimus was a run away slave from Philemon. He had found his way to the big city of Rome trying to hide from Philemon. A slave running away was punishable by death. Onesimus become a believer in Rome under the ministry of Paul. He proved to be of great value to the Apostle. Paul would have liked to keep him but would not do so without Philemon's permission.

The purpose of this letter is to exhort Philemon to take Onesimus back and not punish him. Paul told his not to do this out of duty or because he was asking but to do it for, "**love's sake.**" **1:9.**

Paul reminded Philemon, as well as us, that sometimes things that seem bad really have a good purpose in the

economy of God. **1:15.** Paul stated that he had confidence that Philemon would do the right thing. Notice the intercession of Paul when he says to, ***"If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine own account....I will repay."*** The highest motivation we have for doing right is love. I remind us that Christ put our sins, our debt, on his account and paid the price.

Application to Life's Steps:

- 1- The truth is of paramount importance and we should never compromise it for the sake of love. We should love in the truth.
- 2- We should be someone who build up not tears others down.
- 3- We should understand that we live in a world where false teachers are the common place and be aware of their deception.

4- Love is the grand motivation for forgiveness of wrongs done to us when asked for forgiveness.

Retracing our Steps:

1- Who wrote the books of II and III John? _____

2- Who wrote the book of Jude?

3- Who wrote the book of Philemon?

4- As you read these books and study them is there a truth that you find to apply to your life? If so what is it?

