

March 29, 2011

Who Is This John?

The Synoptic Gospels and Acts

- + Brother of James, son of Zebedee- the “Sons of Thunder” (Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19; Luke 5:20)
- + Called to be a disciple and apostle of Jesus (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14)
- + Witnessed the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-13; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28)
- + Sent with Peter to prepare the Last Supper (Luke 22:8)
- + Was with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:37; Mark 14:33)
- + Witness to the Resurrection (Matt 28:16; Mark 16:14; Luke 24)
- + Witness to the Ascension (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9)
- + With Peter when they healed the lame beggar (Acts 3)
- + Boldly testified to Christ before the council (Acts 4)
- + Sent with Peter to Samaria to complete the baptism of believers (Acts 8)
- + With Peter and James- confirmed Paul as a Christian & ordained him for work with the Gentiles (Gal 2:9)
- + Receives and writes the book of Revelation (Rev 1:9; 22:8)

The Gospel of John- The Beloved Disciple (or the anonymous disciple during the Passion)

The name “John” in the Gospel of John is only applied to John the Baptist and Simon Peter’s father.

- + Reclined with Jesus at the Last Supper (John 13:23)
- + Witnessed Jesus’ trial before the High Priest as well as Peter’s denial (John 18:15)
- + Witnessed Jesus’ crucifixion & given care of Jesus’ mother (John 19:26-27)
- + Outran Peter to the empty tomb (John 20:2-4)
- + Witnessed the resurrected Lord and received the Holy Spirit from him (John 20:19-23)
- + Post-Resurrection fishing expedition (John 21)
- + Rumor among the disciples that he would not die (John 21:23)
- + The author of the Gospel and witness to all the signs in it (John 21:24)

Church Tradition Regarding this Disciple

- + 2nd and 3rd century testimony that John lived in Ephesus as the Bishop of the churches in Asia Minor (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus)
- + Banished to Patmos during reign of Emperor Domitian (81-96AD). (Eusebius and others)

2 John

¹The presbyter to the Elect Lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, ²because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

³Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father’s Son, in truth and love.

⁴I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we received the command from the Father. ⁵And now I ask you, O Lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. ⁶And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. ⁷For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. ⁹Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting, ¹¹for whoever greets him has fellowship (communes) with his evil (teachings).

¹²Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

¹³The children of your Elect Sister greet you.

Verse 1-3: The Greeting

Presbyter- one of the New Testament terms for a man in the Office of the Ministry (like Pastor)

“the Elect Lady & her children”- the local church is the chosen Bride of Christ (Eph 5:22-33; Rev 19:7; Gal 4:26)

“the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever”- who or what is this “truth”? (John 14:6)

Does verse 3 sound familiar? Where have you heard it or something similar anywhere?

4 “walking in truth”- living a life in Christ is encouraging to this apostle, pastor, & bishop

- 6 Loving one another in the the Elect Family, is what they've been taught since they entered the church.
- 7 "many deceivers"- John defines them according to their false teaching and denial of truth
 "the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh"- the Incarnation in history & the Sacraments of perpetuity
 "the deceiver and the antichrist"- the verse itself shows that there are many such deceivers:
 'Many deceivers have gone out... those who do not confess... such a one is the deceiver.'
- 8 "Watch yourselves!"- John, like Paul, calls the church to discern & scrutinize teachings they hear
 "what we have worked for"- early church catechesis of new believers was exhaustive!
- 9 "abide in the teachings of Christ"- remain faithful to the Gospel, going on ahead is seeking matters
 beyond the Gospel of Jesus Christ, those who do this have not God to support their teaching.
- 10-11 is early, apostolic instruction for closed altar and pulpit fellowship with those who profess false teaching
- 12 "much to write"- Like... a Gospel and a Revelation? ☺
- 13 "Children of your Elect Sister"- the members of John's congregation in Ephesus

3 John

¹The *presbyter* to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

²Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. ³For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

⁵Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers (foreigners) as they are, ⁶who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. ⁷For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

⁹I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

¹⁰So if I come, I will bring up *the deeds* he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and *casts* them out of the church.

¹¹Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

¹²Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also *testify*, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with *ink* and *reed pen*. ¹⁴I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

¹⁵Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, every one of them.

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- 1 Who is Gaius? Several possibilities:
 A Macedonian who traveled with Paul, involved in a riot in *Ephesus* (Acts 19:29; c AD 52-55)
 A man from Derbe who traveled with Paul from Greece to Syria (Acts 20:4; c AD 52-55)
 A man (possibly a presbyter) who hosts Paul and the church in his house in Corinth (Rom. 16:23), likely
 the man baptized by Paul in Corinth (1 Cor 1:14; Paul was in Corinth from AD 49-51- 2nd missionary journey)
 None of the above, but either the pastor of the church or the owner of the house in which they meet
 "the beloved (*reverend*)"- as a possible term for ministers see Eph 6:21, Col 4:7, 9 or general Christians
- 5 "these brothers, strangers as they are"- the brothers who reported back to John visited Gaius and knew his orthodoxy
- 6 "their journey"- these are traveling ministers or letter carriers who reported to John once and are now back in Gaius' town
- 8 Supporting missionaries is working towards the truth they proclaim
- 9 "I have written something to the church"- What could this be? 1 John, the Gospel, Revelation?
 "who likes to put himself first"- he is trying to pull rank, over John of all people!
 "does not acknowledge our authority"- Diotrephes does not recognize the apostolic authority of John & his writing.
- 10 What exactly is going on here?
- 12 Demetrius- probably the brother who delivered the letter, a common part of any epistle.
- 13-14 Similar but not exactly the same as 2 John 12- may have been written same time as 2 John