

Hello. /We will begin the 19th lecture on “An Introduction to the New Testament.” Today we will study the Epistles of John and Jude. /First, the **Epistles of John**. /The author of the Epistles of John does not mention his name in the letters.

/Instead, the author, in 2 John and 3 John, introduces himself as an elder. / “Elder” refers to a position in the church, but the original Greek word is “presbuteros,” which means “aged ones.”

/Because the author of the Epistles of John calls himself an elder, some people say that the author is not the Apostle John but is a different elder. /However, early tradition acknowledged the author as John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee.

/He was an apostle and an elder. /Other parts of the Bible refer to apostles as elders. /For example, the Apostle Peter calls himself an elder.

/The author does not reveal his name in 2 John and 3 John but refers to himself as an elder because his identity was widely known. Also, because the church acknowledged his authority, he did not feel the need to reveal his name.

/Therefore, the author of these two epistles is the elderly Apostle John. /It has long been accepted that the Apostle John is the author of the Gospel of John, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation.

/First, we will study **1 John**. /The Apostle John wrote 1 John to help a church of the time deal with a problem that it had encountered. /When John the Apostle was writing this letter, many of the eyewitnesses of Jesus had already departed. It was a time when there were more 2nd and 3rd generation Christians.

/It was a time when believers were starting to be less moved by and passionate about God’s love in salvation. /It became easier for their lives of faith to become a kind of routine. It was a time when their initial hard work, love, and joy could cool down.

/For example, the church of Ephesus was rebuked with these words: “You have abandoned the love you had at first.” /It is fair to say that the church of the time faced internal difficulties due to false prophets leading people astray rather than to say that external persecution troubled the church.

/The main **reason why 1 John was written** was to protect the church from dangerous heretical movements and false teachings that tried to destroy the Christian faith. /The epistle was written to admonish those who already believe to stand firmly on the gospel faith and not be swayed, and to instruct them not to sin but to do what is righteous and to practice love.

/We will take a closer look at the reason why 1 John was written. /1 John 1:4 says, “And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.” /People who do not believe in Christ cannot enjoy this complete joy.

/Man may have much intellectual knowledge, but if he does not know Christ or have faith, he cannot avoid living in misery. /A person's fame and high position does not grant him this complete joy.

/He who believes in Jesus rejoices in an unspeakable, glorious gladness. /Second, in 1 John 2:1, the Apostle John reveals another reason why he wrote the epistle. 1 John 2:1 says, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

/1 John encourages Christians to not sin and to live victorious lives. /The Apostle John especially has in mind the heretical Gnosticism, which had infiltrated the church.

/Gnostics said, "We do not sin." However, because all have sinned, God gave his eternal Son as a propitiation for the sins of the world. But Gnosticism denies this message.

/They deny that Jesus is Christ. /1 John 2:22 says, "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son."

/Gnosticism denied Jesus' true human and divine nature. /To deny that Jesus in the incarnation came in the flesh is to deny the truth.

/That is why the Apostle John, in 1 John 4:1-4, holds Jesus' incarnation as an important standard. In other words, it is an important standard for catching the lies of these false teachers.

/1 John 4:1-4 reads, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

/Gnosticism, a dualistic thought based on Greek philosophy, says that observable things and the flesh are completely evil. /When this dualistic idea is combined with the gospel of Jesus, we see two outcomes.

/First, because they considered the flesh to be extremely evil, they practiced asceticism and abstinence by abusing the flesh. /Practicing celibacy, Gnostics controlled all of their sexual desires and their appetite, which developed into asceticism.

/An extreme form of Gnosticism said that the flesh is evil, but because it is but a shadow and not their nature, they can use their flesh to do whatever they want.

/They believed that because the soul would leave the body, the body would perish, which means it doesn't matter how they treat their bodies. /For these reasons, they did not in the least value chastity or purity.

/They claimed that people in their bodies do not need to keep God's commandments but simply had to have spiritual knowledge. /However, these people were false prophets. /People who belong to this world will listen to the words of false teachers.

/When the church saw these people deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, it recognized them as false teachers and kept its distance from them.

/The third reason why 1 John was written is found in 5:13. /It says, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."

/Another reason why the epistle was written was to give Christians full confidence of their salvation. /It is to have the Christians know that the things they learned from the apostles and the knowledge they have is the truth. That is why the word "know" appears 33 times in 1 John.

/The Apostle John is not attacking the persecutors from the outside who are trying to destroy the Christian faith. /He is attacking those who try to alter the Christian faith to be appropriate for the times. In other words, he attacks the false teachers who changed the gospel so that it would fit in the framework of popular Greek philosophy of the time.

/In the same the way legalists of Paul's time created a different gospel that confused the churches of Galatia, Gnosticism had created a different gospel. /This heretical movement changes its form, but it continues to appear.

/Reading this epistle, we must protect our faith and defeat all the wrong ideologies that try to defile our faith. /Combining the gospel with another culture, philosophy, or religion does not make it better. It becomes a false teaching.

/In order to filter these false teachings, we must hold firmly to the word of life taught by the apostles, which is the gospel. We will be able to reject these heretical teachings when we properly know the gospel. /As they have done in the past, false teachers continue to threaten the church today.

/Because of the Apostle John, Gnosticism and heretical ideologies that had entered the early church were being condemned and rejected. /If John the Apostle had not warned against these heretical ideas, they may have injured the truth of the gospel.

/False doctrine destroys proper faith and twists our actions and attitude. /Various ideologies have brought upon confusion in modern times as well. We need to properly learn the gospel and be certain about what we know.

/1 John 1:1 says, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.”

/We will now briefly study 2 John and 3 John. /2 and 3 John are the shortest books of the Old and New Testament Bible. /2 John is made up of 13 verses while 3 John is made up of 15 verses.

/The Old Testament’s Obadiah is one chapter long with 21 verses, and the New Testament’s Philemon and Jude are each made up of 25 verses. /We first have to understand the setting in which 2 and 3 John were written.

/The early church had various workers. /For example, there were apostles. /The church acknowledged these people as witnesses to Jesus Christ’s resurrection. /Their authority was recognized within the church.

/Second, there were prophets. /Prophets of the time did not belong to one local church, but they travelled here and there to evangelize. They were travelling evangelists. They went around to places and preached sermons.

/Also in the church were elders and deacons. /Elders and deacons were affiliated with the church and carried out their duties as elders and deacons.

/However, 2 John and 3 John were written because of travelling teachers. /When the travelling teachers visited churches, Christians had to warmly receive them.

/But of these preachers, some called themselves teachers, visiting churches and causing problems in the local church. /Finding local churches and claiming to preach the gospel, they received financial assistance.

/A bigger problem was the doctrine these people taught. /Most of them did not faithfully preach the gospel, but taught false doctrine.

/Were they to treat these people well or kick them out? This question was asked. /Some teachers stayed with one church for an excessively long period and asked for money.

/ “Didache,” a book of the apostles’ teachings, talks about these false teachers. /It says, “Whosoever then comes and teaches you all these things aforesaid, receive him. But if the teacher himself be perverted and teach another doctrine to destroy these things, do not listen to him... But let him not stay more than one day, or if need be a second as well; but if he stay three days, he is a false prophet... let him accept nothing but bread till he reach his night’s lodging; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet.”

/The Apostle John especially warns against false teachers in 2 John. /False teachers also taught heretical false teachings. /2 John says, “To the elect lady and her children.”

/This expression does not refer to female believers and their children, but it can be seen as referring to the church and its believers. /It compares travelling teachers and the church to a woman and her children.

/2 John first and foremost reminds believers to “love one another” (verses 5 and 6), and after that, it warns against false travelling teachers. /The word instructs them to recognize people who teach a distorted truth and false teachers, ordering them to not receive them into their houses or greet them.

/Verse 7 says, “For 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.” We too must watch out for these false teachers.

/3 John is written to a Christian by the name of Gaius. /Gaius was probably a faithful worker of the church who worked for the gospel ministry even in his abundance.

/He is complimented for showing kindness to the teachers who visited his area, and he is encouraged to continue to do so. /However, Diotrephes is rebuked for not welcoming the Lord’s servants.

/He was a problematic figure who liked to put himself first, did not welcome the travelling teachers, and if there were people who welcomed the travelling teachers, he would stop them from doing so.

/Verse 11 says, “Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.”

/Here we have Demetrius, who liked to do good. /It says that he received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. /2 John warns against false teachers who should not be received but should be rejected. 3 John admonishes readers to treat true teachers with sincere love and to work with them.

/Next we will study **Jude**. /Jude is made up of one chapter; it is a short letter. /Because we do not understand the situation in which this epistle was written, it is not easy to understand the content of Jude.

/We know that “Jude” wrote this letter. /Jude verse 1 reads, “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.” Therefore, the recipients of this letter are all Christians.

/The purpose of this epistle is to remind churches of the need to always stay awake so that they may reject heretics and stand firmly in faith.

/Verse 3 says, “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”

/People who perverted the grace of our God into sensuality and denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ, infiltrated the church. Jude was written to prevent these things from happening.

/Heretics entered the church early on. /From the start, heretics and false teachers threatened the church. /Heretics who twisted the truth of God and tempted those who did not stand firmly on the word of God were always there.

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/We need to keep the truth of God, that is the truth of salvation. /This is the great responsibility of the church. /Who were the heretics Jude warned against? /They were false teachers who denied that Christ is Lord.

/The second half of verse 4 says that they “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” /They deny that God is the only God. They did not acknowledge the fact that Jesus Christ is the only mediator.

/These people distorted the truth of the Bible in order to fulfill a human objective. They promoted sin and debauchery.

/Verse 4 says, “For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality.”

/How do we identify heretics? Heretics live very sexually immoral lives and teach heretical things. /They say whatever they want to say and eat whatever they want to eat. These people are selfish.

/They adhere to antinomianism. /What do they believe? They say that because they have been saved by the grace of God, they are not tied down by the law and will be saved regardless of their actions.

/However, these people are “worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.” Verse 19. /They make wrong use of the grace of salvation.

/There are Christians today who abuse the grace of God’s forgiveness of our sins to sin. /We should take a look at our lives to see if we are these people.

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/Coming face to face with these various false teachings, the church of today must keep its purity. God gave us his word through the apostles so that we can make this happen. /Our churches must properly and in purity protect this truth.

/This concludes the 19th lecture on “An Introduction to the New Testament.” /Thank you.