

Study/Series: New Testament Overviews

2 & 3 John

I. Introduction.

A. Theme of 2 & 3 John: Do not show hospitality to those who reject the truth (2 John), but show hospitality to those who proclaim the truth (3 John). Hendriksen.

B. Introductory Notes.

II. When We Don't Offer Christian Fellowship. 2 John. While hospitality is certainly addressed, it doesn't quite get at the heart of the issue. It is a matter of Christian fellowship. Fellowship is not an informal gabfest, as we sometimes think of it, but that which binds us together as a unified people, separate from the world. Our fellowship is because we are joined together in Christ, because joined to Christ. It makes us a people of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father; a people of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose, united by one gospel. So, we "know the truth" (vs. 1), "the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever" (vs. 2). Therefore, those who do not bring the true gospel, or confess it, or hold to it, we cannot consider them to be in fellowship with us. We cannot treat them as though we share fellowship with them or they with us (vss. 10-11). We cannot acknowledge or accept their claims or overtures for fellowship from people with a false gospel, no matter how much they may protest, or how subtle they may be.

III. When We Do Offer Christian Fellowship. 3 John. On the other hand, we are to "receive the brethren" who walk in the truth as we do, especially those who labor in the cause of the gospel and need our assistance. Fellowship extends to all Christians who know truth and love truth. Shame on those within the bounds of the visible church who refuse to receive them and refuse to extend fellowship and its deeds to the brethren. Thus, hospitality becomes a mark of fellowship (see WCF 26.1-2).

A. Emphasis on Truth and Love. John emphasizes walking in them; i.e., conducting one's life according to truth and love, always upholding both. In connection, note Paul's emphasis on truth and love in

places such as Eph. 4:14-16. How theological Liberalism and German Higher Criticism can claim a difference between John's theology and Paul's theology is a "mystery"; i.e., a complete error on their part.