

II and III John are the shortest books in the bible, both having less than 300 Greek words (Parallel Bible Commentary, Nelson). These two are two sides of the same coin, that coin being about hospitality. In II John the elect lady is exhorted not to give hospitality, a place to stay, to those who taught a contrary doctrine to the true gospel. In III John Gaius was encouraged to continue showing hospitality to the messengers of God who taught the truth of God. In both letters the word "truth" is key.

v. 1 – The elder to the elect lady and her children whom I love in the "truth": and not I only, but also all they that have known the "truth." The elder is John, but there is some question about who the elect lady is. There is the thought that this was a literal lady, elect meaning chosen. Then this would be commendation for her walk in the truth and warning that she not take false teachers into her house in hospitality. The other thought is that the elect lady was a metaphor for the church, the church sometimes being referred to as a she (i.e., bride of Christ) and her children would be the members who attended. It is not completely decided which, although some commentaries would lean to one or the other. The word 'elect' is important, chosen by God.

v. 2-4 – The truth, the Spirit of Truth, which is the Holy Spirit, dwells in us. John was glad that they were walking in the truth.

v.5,6 – We keep the Lords commandments and walk in them, especially that we love one another.

v.7 – 9 - there are deceivers that confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (ref. I John 4:2,3), and they are antichrists) Watch out, that our work in you is not undone and you lose what you have gained. Those who don't live according to the true teaching of Christ are not true believers.

v.10,11 – IF THERE COME ANY UNTO YOU, AND BRING NOT THIS DOCTRINE, RECEIVE HIM NOT INTO YOUR HOUSE, NEITHER BID HIM GOD SPEED. FOR HE THAT BIDDETH HIM GOD SPEED IS PARTAKER OF HIS EVIL DEEDS.

v.12, 13 - cant write everything, but I hope to see you face to face. Children of your sister greet you: if literal, then her nieces and nephews, if metaphor, then a sister church and her members.