

3 John 01 - Gaius the Encourager; Diotrephes the Dictator; Demetrius the Exemplar

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3 John 1

I. Greeting (3 John 1a-b)

(1) Sender: Elder (1a)

(2) Recipient: Beloved Gaius (1b)

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

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

1 From: The Elder

To: My dear friend Gaius, whom I genuinely love.

1 The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

- "The elder" - the Apostle John; John used the same identification for himself in 2 John 1

- "...Gaius" - we do not know exactly who this Gaius was; his was a common first name at that time

— Early church tradition did not identify him with Paul's native Macedonian companion (Acts 19:29), Paul's companion from Derbe (Acts 20:4), or the Corinthian Paul baptized who hosted the church in Corinth (Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14)

- "...love in truth" - means truly and in accord with God's truth

— John's concern for both love and truth is again evident in this epistle, as it was in 2 John)

— Both John and Gaius held the truth as the apostles taught it

II. Gaius (3 John 2-8)

(1) Prayer for Gaius' well-being (2)

2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.

2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.

2 Dear friend, I pray that you are doing well in every way and that you are healthy, just as your soul is healthy.

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

- Those who promote the "prosperity gospel" interpret this verse as saying that God wants everyone to be healthy and monetarily prosperous, and if you're not rich and healthy, you've missed God's will...but that's not what this verse says

— First, John is not laying out doctrine in this verse...this is his introduction. He's effectively saying, "How are you guys? Hope you're well, healthy, etc."

— Second, John's wish in this verse is that they're physical health be as sound as their spiritual (devotional) health. John held one's spiritual health in higher regard than one's physical health.

— You can easily decipher false doctrine when they construct an entire doctrine of from an obscure verse in an introduction. This is what happens when people don't handle the Word of God correctly.

(2) Rejoicing over Gaius' obedience (3-4)

3 For I was overjoyed when brothers came and testified to your truth, *that is*, how you are walking in truth.

3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, *that is*, how you are walking in truth.

3 I was overjoyed when some brothers arrived and testified about your truthfulness and how you live according to the truth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

- John heard from other believers that Gaius was a man of the truth; his lifestyle was consistent with the truth

4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are living according to the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

- We don't know if Gaius was John's "child" physically, spiritually (his convert), or metaphorically; the metaphorical usage is the most common in the NT

(3) Commendation of Gaius' love for the brethren (5-8)

(A) Hospitality to the layman (5-6)

5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brothers *and sisters*, and especially *when they are* strangers;

5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially *when they are* strangers;

5 Dear friend, you are faithful in whatever you do for the brothers, especially when they are strangers.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

- Gaius obviously had the gift of hospitality...

6 and they have testified to your love before **the church**. **You will do well to** send them on their way **in a manner worthy of God**.

6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

6 They have testified before the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

- "...the church" - John's church, probably in Ephesus

- "...You will do well to" - "please"

- John exhorted Gaius to continue his commendable treatment of visitor, often strangers

- "...in a manner worthy of God" - in a manner worthy of Him whose messengers they are

(B) Financial support to missionaries (7-8)

7 For they went out for the sake of **the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.**

7 For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.

7 After all, they went on their trip for the sake of the Name, accepting no support from gentiles.

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

- "...the Name" - 3 John is the only book in the NT that doesn't mention Jesus Christ by name

- "...accepting nothing from the Gentiles" - never soliciting help from the unsaved;

Abraham had this same policy (Gen 14:21-24)

- Be wary of those generally soliciting from all that come their way. There is something unseemly of a preacher of the gospel soliciting funds from people to whom he offers God's free salvation.

- There are many "ministries" the Lord would probably shut down if the gullible would let Him!

8 Therefore **we ought to support such people**, so that we may prove to be **fellowworkers** with the truth.

8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

8 Therefore, we ought to support such people so that we can become genuine helpers with them.

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

- "...we ought to support such people" - hospitality is not only an opportunity, but also an obligation

- Those who receive spiritual blessings from the ministry of the Word ought to share material blessings (Gal 6:6-10; 1 Cor 9:7-11)

- "...fellow workers" - giving financial and hospitality makes the giver a partner ("fellow worker") with the minister in his work (Cf. 2 John 10-11), and with the truth (the gospel)

III. Diotrephes (3 John 9-11)

(1) Specific sins (9-10)

(A) Lust for preeminence (9a)

(B) Rejection of apostolic authority (9b)

9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, **who loves to be first** among **them**, does not accept what we say.

9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say.

9 I wrote a letter to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be in charge, will not recognize our authority.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

- Gaius' good example stands out sharply against Diotrephes' bad example

— John brought Diotrephes into the picture in order to clarify the responsibility of Gaius, and all other readers of this epistle, and to give instructions concerning this erring brother

- "...who loves to be first" - John exposed Diotrephes' motivation as pride. Diotrephes had rejected what John had said and/or written in order to exalt himself.

— John did not say or imply that Diotrephes held false doctrine. He only blamed his improper pride and ambition (Cf. Matt 20:27).

- "...them" - believers in that church

(C) Slanders apostles (10a)

(D) Refuses to receive the brethren (10b)

(E) Forbids and excommunicates those who receive the brethren (10c)

10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly **accusing** us with malicious words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brothers either, and he forbids those who want *to do so* and **puts *them* out** of the church.

10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire *to do so* and puts *them* out of the church.

10 For this reason, when I come I will call attention to what he is doing in spreading false charges against us. And not content with that, he refuses to receive the brothers. He even tries to stop those who want to accept them and throws them out of the church.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

- The Apostle John promised and warned that, whenever he might visit that congregation, he would point out, probably publicly, Diotrephes' sinful behavior—assuming it persisted
- John condemns the actions of Diotrephes not because he violated sound teaching regarding the person and nature of Jesus Christ but because his life was a contradiction to the truth of the gospel
- "...accusing" - *phlyareo*, speaking foolishly or senselessly
- Worse than that, he was not giving hospitality to the visiting brethren, as Gaius was. Perhaps he saw them as a threat to himself.
- Third, he intimidated others in the church and forced them to stop welcoming these people and even expelled them from the church
- "...puts *them* out" - *ekballei*, need not imply formal excommunication from the Church, as this became known later (Cf. Matt 18:17; Luke 6:22; John 9:34-35; 1 Cor 5:2)

(2) General character (11)

(A) Not to be imitated (11a)

(B) Not right with God (11b)

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. **The one who does what is good is of God;** the one who does what is evil has not seen God.

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.

11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The person who does what is good is from God. The person who does what is evil has never seen God.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

- John's encouragement doubtless strengthened Gaius' resolve to resist Diotrephes

- "...The one who does what is good is of God" - a person who demonstrates action that has its source in God

— God's children do good works because God is their Father and they share His nature (1 John 3:9; 5:18). The person who does evil may be a Christian, but he has not seen (not been in close fellowship with) God, and he is behaving like Satan when he does evil.

— John was not accusing Diotrephes of being unsaved but of behaving like an unsaved person. The person who knows God intimately (abides in Him) does what is good, not what is evil (1 John 3:6; 5:18).

IV. Demetrius: three witnesses favoring his spirituality (3 John 12)

(1) All believers (12a)

(2) The truth (12b)

(3) John and the apostles (12c)

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

12 Demetrius has received a *good* testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

12 Demetrius has received a good report from everyone, including the truth itself. We, too, can testify to this report, and you know that our testimony is true.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

- John urged Gaius to show hospitable love to Demetrius in order to give Gaius an opportunity to practice love and thereby reprove Diotrephes' lack of love

— John gave three recommendations of Demetrius' worth:

(1) He had a good reputation among all who knew him

(2) His character and conduct were in harmony with the truth

(3) John personally knew him and vouched for him

V. Conclusion (3 John 13-14)

(1) Explanation of the letter's brevity (13)

13 I had many things to write to you, but I do not want to write to you with pen and ink;

13 I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write *them* to you with pen and ink;

13 Although I have a great deal to write to you, I would rather not write with pen and ink.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

(2) Plans of John's imminent visit (14a)

(3) Greetings (14b-15)

(A) To Gaius (14b)

14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

14 Instead, I hope to see you soon and speak face to face.

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

(B) Asking Gaius to greet John's friends (15)

15 Peace *be* to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

15 Peace *be* to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

15 May peace be with you! Your friends greet you. Greet each of our friends by name."

15 Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

- Verse 15 in the KJV is often appended to the end of v14

