

3 John 1-8

SALUTATION & MISSIONARY SUPPORT

Overview of 3 John

- **Authorship** - As in 2 John, the writer called himself simply "the elder." In all probability this suggests not only his seniority (presbyteros means "old man") but also his authority as an eyewitness to the life of Christ.
- **Background** - 3 John is a personal letter written to a man named Gaius. Likely Gaius belonged to a church somewhere in Roman Asia (western Turkey). The writer seems to have been urging Gaius to offer hospitality to Demetrius (v. 12) who was evidently a traveling Christian evangelist (vv. 5-8). Demetrius was probably also the bearer of the letter.



Overview of 3 John (cont'd)

- **Background (cont'd)** - The Apostle John apparently needed to appeal directly to Gaius for the support of Demetrius, since the church was dominated by a man named Diotrephes who did not extend a welcome to traveling brethren (vv. 9-10). Diotrephes even sought to excommunicate those who offered such men their hospitality.
- **Date** - As with 2 John, no independent data exists on which to base a date for the writing of 3 John. It is simplest to suggest a date for all three epistles sometime in the early 60s of the Christian era.

Outline of 3 John

- I) **Gaius Is a Faithful Christian (1–8)**
 - A) Live spiritually (1–2)
 - B) Walk truthfully (3–4)
 - C) Serve faithfully (5–6)
 - D) Minister generously (7–8)
- II) **Diotrephes Is a Conceited Christian (9–10)**
 - A) Do not be driven by prideful ambition (9a)
 - B) Do not display pompous arrogance (9b)
 - C) Do not deliver perverse accusations (10a)
 - D) Do not dominate with profane activity (10b)
- III) **Demetrius Is a Consistent Christian (11–12)**
 - A) Pursue a godly example (11)
 - B) Possess a good testimony (12)
- IV) **John Is a Caring Christian (13–15)**
 - A) Desire the presence of fellow believers (13-14)
 - B) Desires peace for fellow believers (15)

3 John 1-4

- 1** - The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.
- 2** - Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.
- 3** - For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.
- 4** - I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

3 John 1

- v1** - The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.
 - elder** - presbyteros - "the older one", "the senior" (covered in 2 John 1)
 - beloved** - *tō agapētō* - the adjective describes this man as being well-beloved by his fellow-saints, an outstanding member of the local church to which he belonged.
 - Gaius** - common Greco-Roman name. There are several in the NT (Acts 19:29; Acts 20: 4, 5; 1 Cor. 1:14; Rom. 16:23), but nothing to indicate this is one of the previously mentioned. He was however a man of means like the Gaius in the Corinthian church.
 - whom I love in truth** - This man is beloved by John and others (v.3) and the apostle can say that he loves him in truth, that is, both "truly" and in accord with Christian truth....in Christ.

3 John 2

- v2** - Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.
 - prosper** - *euodousthai* - equivalent to our English expression "get along well" and does not necessarily mean material prosperity.
 - be in good health** - the apostle wants things to go well for Gaius and for him to be in good health.
 - soul prospers** - *psuchē* - The soul is the principle of individuality, the seat of personal impressions. It has a side in contact with both the material and the spiritual element of humanity, and is thus the mediating organ between body and spirit. It was the inner heart-life of Gaius that John said was in a prosperous condition. John hoped that Gaius's temporal well-being might match his spiritual well being.

3 John 3

- v3** - For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.
 - came and testified** - Christian workers were always going out from Ephesus on preaching and teaching missions, and bringing back to John, reports from the various churches. "*Came*" is a present participle in the Greek text, and speaks of continuous action. The brethren were constantly coming back from these missions and bringing John glowing reports of the truth of God in the heart of Gaius and of the out-working of that truth in his life.
 - how you are walking in the truth** - John had heard from others that Gaius was a man of the truth. That is, *his lifestyle was consistent with the truth*. John wanted to communicate that Gaius was the kind of man that could be counted on with regards to what he was about to say.

3 John 4

- v4** - I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.
 - no greater joy** - *chara* - John's source of joy came from a place of seeing other's in spiritual dependence on the truth. He couldn't imagine anything making him happier.
 - my children** - *teknon* - We do not know if Gaius was John's child physically, spiritually (his convert), or metaphorically. The last usage of this word is the most common one in the New Testament. In this case he could have been a disciple of John or simply a younger believer (cf. 2 John 4; 1 Tim. 1:2).
 - walking in the truth** - *peripateo* - habitually ordering their behavior in the sphere of the truth.

3 John 5-8

- 5** - Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers;
- 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.
- 7** - For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.
- 8** - Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

3 John 5

- v5** - Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers;
 - acting faithfully** - more literally a work of faith
 - accomplish** - work, do, bring about
 - brethren** - brother, fellow believer, likely traveling evangelists in this context
 - strangers** - the traveling evangelists he did not know personally
 - Gaius was a "cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7) and faithfully welcomed other believers and offered his Christian hospitality (Heb. 13:2)

3 John 6

- v6** - 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.
 - testified to your love before the church** - Gaius' hospitality (your love) had reached the church where John now was, possibly Jerusalem.
 - You will do well** - idiomatic in the original and equal to "please"
 - to send them on their way** - making adequate provisions for one's guest, both while they stayed and at the time of their departure.
 - in a manner worthy of God** - Nothing less than such generosity would be "worthy of God," who expressed His supreme generosity in the giving of His Son.

3 John 7

- v7** - For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.
 - the Name** - that of Jesus which was now exalted above every name (Phil. 2:9-11). To go out on behalf of that Name was a supreme honor (cf. Acts 5:41 for the honor of suffering for it). "The Name" is an OT expression speaking of all that God is in His glorious attributes. It refers here and in Philippians to all that the Lord Jesus is in His glorious attributes. The word is used in the sense of reputation, of what a person is in character and stands for.
 - accepting nothing from the Gentiles** - *ethnikos* - refers to the pagan world of that time. Naturally, it was inappropriate for those who did so to seek support from those who did not believe in or honor that Name. Commercialization was not a part of their support.

3 John 8

- v8** - Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.
 - Therefore we ought** - intensive way, literally "as for us, in contradistinction to the pagans we ought to have a moral obligation.
 - to support such men** - the fact that faithful Christian evangelists sought no help from the unsaved meant that Christians were under a special obligation to assist them. By extending the needed help (showing hospitality to such men).
 - so that we may be fellow workers with the truth** - The thought is of partnership with what the truth accomplishes in people's hearts and lives. It was a noble objective for Gaius to follow. Notice the emphasis on truth in comparison to 2 John 10-11