

HHBC



3rd John:

“Letter To a Friend”

Vs. 1-8: Introduction to the Third Letter / Salutation / & Missionary Support



3 John 1-8

- 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.
- 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.



John's 3rd Letter:

H.A. Ironside's Outline of III John:

II. Letter to a Friend (*3 John 1-14*)

A. Gaius (Vs. 1-8)

B. Diotrephes (v. 9-11)

C. Demetrius (Vs. 12)

D. Conclusion (Vs. 13, 14)



3rd John

Who was Gaius?

- **A Gaius is mentioned in Acts 19:** the riot at Ephesus after the success of the gospel squelched the commerce of Demetrius's silver forged hand-crafted idols of Artemis

*Acts 19:29-30: The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along **Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia**. And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him.*

- **A Gaius is mentioned in the aftermath this riot:** (where Paul left for Macedonia, then Greece, then back through Macedonia, the men below waited from him at Troas)

*Acts 20:4: And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and **Gaius of Derbe**, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.*

- **Paul is hosted by a Gaius at the closing of Romans:**

Romans 16:21-24. Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. 22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

*23 **Gaius, host to me and to the whole church**, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother. 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*



3rd John

Who was Gaius? *contin....*

- **Finally: A Gaius is mentioned in the opening passages of I Corinthians**

*I Cor. 1: 11-17 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? **I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius**, so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.*

MAIN QUESTION: is Gaius of 3 JOHN the same Gaius that was beat up in Ephesus, that waited for Paul in Troas after the Riot at Ephesus, the same one who hosted Paul in Corinth while he wrote to the Romans, and one and the same as the one Paul baptized in Corinth?

That's a good question: this teacher prefers: 'Yes'. Which would mean Gaius was very involved in supporting Paul's ministry in Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia (where Corinth is); but this is up in the air among scholars.



3rd John

What's 3rd John about in a nutshell?

- **It acts as a corollary letter to 2 John (Ironsides)**
 - a. 2 John 'testifies against fellowship with apostates; even hospitality to them; *whereas*
 - b. 3 John teaches that fellowship/hospitality is absolutely encouraged if it's "with the truth". The man at the end of the letter, Demetrius is endorsed by John, who is "from the truth itself" should be supported.

- **It is a letter about Missionary support & hospitality**
 - a. So long as the missionary is a true minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not a deceiver/apostate/antichrist
 - b. John encourages warm hospitality to ministers of the gospel

- **John provides a CONTRAST to his directive of support & hospitality**
 - a. In the testimony against Diotrephes;
 - b. Preview of 3 John 9-11: who was Diotrephes?



3rd John

Diotrephes:

- **He was the elder/ or self-appointed leader of an unnamed Church which John apparently wrote to**
 - a. Diotrephes: means "nourished of God" (Gaebelein)
 - b. He had an incredible ego: "loves to be the first among them" (v. 9)
 - c. He had a lot of brass: unjustly accused us (John and Gaius...?) with wicked words (v. 10)
 - d. He was inhospitable towards the brethren (v. 10)
 - e. He had a power complex: putting those who are hospitable out of the church- in the style of excommunication. Gaebelein calls him a *pope in embryo* (or the beginnings of the papacy)

Demetrius:

- **Apparently, an itinerant preacher of the true gospel**
 - a. He had the truth (v. 12)
 - b. Had a good reputation among many (v. 12)
 - c. Endorsed by John (v. 12)



3 John 1 & 2

The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.

The Salutation:

1. John's use of elder and 'beloved' is consistent with 1 John and 2 John. These are his 'calling cards'
2. 'Prosper': is to have an increase in success
3. Good 'health': **hygiainō** – (a.) soundness of being, free from disease. Luke uses this word 3x: for not the well but the sick need a physician, the centurion's slave was found in good health, and the Prodigal son was found in good health
 - a. But: Paul uses **hygiainō** **8 times** in I Tim, II Tim & Titus in exhortations to these men for: sound doctrine / sound words / sound teaching
4. Gaius's soul is prospering and in good health; John is praying that his bodily condition will be made to follow.
5. Is Mr. Spock's "**live long & prosper**" salutation much the same...?

3 John 3 & 4

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For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

Walking in the Truth

1. John's exact sentiment to the Chosen Lady of 2 John is repeated here for Gaius
2. 'Walking in the truth' = *peripateō* – the daily treading of the feet in the realm of truth. Daily walk / conduct of life
3. 'Brethren came and testified': what was the occasion of believers in John's fold coming to him and testifying to the faithfulness of Gaius?
4. More on that in the following verses....



3 John 5 & 6

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.

Verses 5 and 6: The Crux / Occasion of the Letter -

1. These men are itinerant or traveling preachers. But their gospel is true and correct according to John's endorsement.
2. 'Itinerant': *iter* – means way or journey. Itinerary: the route of a journey. One who travels along a way.
3. Perhaps an occasion for the writing of this letter: is Gaius's confusion or lack of confidence in his action of providing hospitality to these men, and John must assure this saint he is indeed acting faithfully, in the truth.
 - a) A possibility: Gaius was given an excoriating rebuke by Diotrephes, and was quite vexed about it- leading him to ask himself: ***“Have I done the right thing?” “Am I aiding and abetting these vagrant vagabond town to town preachers?”***
 - b) Gaius's spiritual gift: could have been an exceptional heart for hospitality and hosting of the traveling saints
 - c) Especially if: he is the same Gaius who hosted Paul for a long while in Corinth while he wrote to the Romans.
- d) 'Stranger' = *xenos* - a foreigner, alien, one without a share in your community / association



3 John 5 & 6

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Verses 5 and 6: The Crux / Occasion of the Letter -

5. Apparently: alongside a great number of false teachers / antichrists / deceivers, there were wandering, journeyman preachers teaching truth. Much the same as the Apostle Paul's method of traveling and preaching.
6. These men are on the move like missionaries, without a fixed church base, and this informal "freelancing" may have driven Diotrephes mad. He thinks it is disorderly. But their gospel is true and correct, and John has no problem with this way of ministering.
7. Gaius now has the commendation he seeks from John, and apparently John wrote to Diotrephes to set him straight, but Diotrephes had the Pharasitic hubris to challenge and take on the great Apostle.
8. Note: in v. 6 that even the wandering preachers testified to John of Gaius's faithfulness- v. 6a
9. Some parallels to 3rd John's theme: The Good Samaritan, Jesus washing His disciple's feet; the Sheep & Goats judgment / Entry into the Kingdom principle from Mat. 25: *"For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;"*
10. The "Itinerant Preacher" that Diotrephes rebuked the faithful Gaius for: is certainly Demetrius



3 John 7 & 8

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.

The Traveling Ministers went out for the Sake of the Name

1. **‘the Name’**: all things wrapped up in the rank, authority, interests, commands, excellencies, deeds... of a person [Strong]
 - a) “for the sake of the (Jesus’s) name: **equivalent to for defending, spreading, strengthening, the authority of Christ** [Strong]
2. ‘Accepting nothing from the Gentiles’: the itinerant preachers would only depend on like-minded believers for their support, taking nothing of the unsaved they were proclaiming the gospel to.... Giving the gospel free of charge, compare to how Paul would do it in our recent 10 a.m. study of 2 Corinthians:

2 COR 11:7: *Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. 9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, **for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied.***
3. Therefore, it logically follows: these wandering preachers who are in the truth & one of us deserve our support



3 John 1-8

Final Thoughts:

*The witness borne to Gaius' truth, and his walk in the truth, must be noticed; and how blessed and wonderful the association with poor wandering, despised preachers! They had gone out for the Name (an aged servant of Christ once said that, of all employments, to go across a country with the love of God in the heart, and a Bible in the pocket, was the most blessed), not merely "gone out to preach," but gone out for the Name - that Name that carries everything with it, and which we can bless with adoration, notwithstanding that so many seducers have "gone out" too. And Gaius had received them, thus cooperating with the truth. It would be often said, "You must not encourage this kind of people," and "that the thing will become abused." It may be abused, like every good thing, but that is only a further proof that there is such a thing as being employed (the highest of employments) as a wandering preacher of the truth of God. Gaius manifests the divine life in recognizing and receiving such; **the Lord had sent them forth.***

E.L. BEVIR, THE CHRISTIAN'S FRIEND MAGAZINE, VOL. 14, PG. 201, 1887