

3 JOHN

Author :

John one of the original apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Date :

Probably sometime between 85 and 95 AD.

Theme :

Three individuals – John’s good friend Gaius who behaved in accordance with the truth, Diotrefes who exalted himself and opposed John, and Demetrius witnessed to by the truth itself. Believers are to follow the example of Gaius and Demetrius and to reject the example of Diotrefes. Verse 11 seems to be the key verse.

Contents :

Gaius – someone who proved he was a believer	1-8
Diotrefes – someone who proved he was not a believer	9-11
Demetrius – someone even the truth speaks well of	12

The elder to the dearly loved Gaius whom I love in the truth.

2 Dear *friend*, above everything I want you to prosper and be in health, just as your soul prospers. 3 For I greatly rejoiced when the brethren came and testified about the truth that is in you, just as you are walking in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth.

5 Dear *friend*, you are doing faithfully whatever you do for the brethren, and for strangers. 6 They have testified before the church about your love. If you bring them forward on their journey in a godly way, you will do well; 7 because they went forth for his name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to receive such *men*, so that we might be helpers together for the truth.

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who

loves to have the preeminence among them, will not receive us. 10 So, if I come, I will remember the deeds which he does, chattering against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he does not receive the brethren himself, and forbids those who want to *do so*, and puts *them* out of the church.

11 Dear *friend*, do not follow what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

12 All *men* speak well of Demetrius, and the truth itself *does also*. Yes, and we *also* testify *for him*; and you know that our testimony is true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not write to you with ink and pen. 14 But I hope to see you soon, and we will speak face to face. Peace *be* to you. *Our* friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

1 "Elder" – 2 John 1.

"Gaius" – there are three men named Gaius in Acts and the letters of Paul (Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14). It was a common name in those days, and we do not know whether this Gaius was one of those three or another person.

"In the truth" – 2 John 1.

2 Gaius was doing well in his inner spiritual life. But it seems he was facing difficulties in other matters, and these may have affected his health. No doubt John prayed for what he saw was Gaius' real need.

3,4 "Very glad" – 2 John 4.

"The brethren" – spiritual brothers, believers in Christ.

"Walking in the truth" – Gaius was sincere and loyal to God's revelation. He accepted the truth and lived according to it.

"In the truth" – 2 John 4.

"My children" – he means spiritual children, those who had come to Christ through his ministry, or those whom he had nurtured with the Word of God. Compare 1 Tim 1:2.

5 "Faithfully" – his faithfulness to the truth of God made him faithful in helping Christ's servants in any way he could. He put the truth he had learned into practice – an example to us all.

6 "Love" – love shown in action – 1 John 3:16-18.

"Bring them. . . on their journey" – John is referring to traveling evangelists who went from place to place preaching Christ's gospel. When it was time to go to another place to preach, Gaius would give them provisions or money for the journey.

"You will do well" – Christians in local churches should treat God's servants in a way pleasing to God who calls them and puts them in the ministry.

7,8 "For his name's sake" – he meant the Lord Jesus Christ. These traveling preachers did not go out for their own sakes, or for any profit or gain.

"Gentiles" – evidently they were working chiefly among people other than Jews. These servants of Christ trusted God to

meet their needs and went to preach the truth. And they did not accept help from the people among whom they went. If believers in the churches did not help them they would have to endure great difficulties.

"Helpers together for the truth" – not all believers can be evangelists or traveling preachers or missionaries, but all can help those who are. The whole church with one heart and mind should do all in their power to see that the gospel goes out to everyone on the face of the earth.

9 "Diotrephes" – here was a man so vain, so arrogant, so ambitious that he would have nothing to do with the great apostle John himself. He wanted to be the one authority in the church, the one everybody else noticed and looked up to and obeyed. Such men are still with us in the churches. We must watch out for those who are ambitious for self rather than for Christ.

10 "Chattering against us" – some people think that the way to be first is by putting everyone else down. By destroying the reputation of others they vainly imagine that theirs will shine brighter.

"Puts them out of the church" – he not only had no interest in helping God's servants spread the gospel, he tried to prevent others from helping. Did he think these "brothers" were a threat to his supremacy in the church there?

11 "Follow. . . what is good" – 1 Cor 4:16; Eph 5:1; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; Heb 6:12; 13:7. "He who does good is of God" – that is, he who practices good, as revealed by God – 1 John 3:7-10. Not everything that men think is good is good in God's eyes (Luke 16:15).

"Does" – he is not speaking of one act, but the manner of life of a person.

12 "The truth itself" – in other words, he put the truth of God into practice, and so according to the truth revealed in the Bible he was a good man. The word of God tells each of us what we are by judging what we do.

14 "Peace be to you" – John 20:19,21,26; Rom 15:33.