

3 John

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Study Outline

Background: Though it's hard to say with certainty what church John was addressing, it seems evident that following his 2nd letter and before his third John had written another letter to this unknown church. This letter as well as the disciples who'd carried his message were apparently opposed and rejected by a local church leader named Diotrephes. Though we don't know the content of this mystery letter, the Apostle's authority was challenged and the letter was either lost or destroyed.

Main Point: Though John's disciples had been mistreated by Diotrephes, it seems another church leader by the name of Gaius had gone out of his way to show these men hospitality and kindness. Following the report he had received from his disciples, John writes directly to Gaius commending him for his brotherly love and godly conduct. Apparently Gaius was a man who walked in truth and loved the brethren. He was a perfect example of the doctrine of John's first two letters being lived out in a practical way.

Aside from commending Gaius, John also takes a moment to call out Diotrephes who had allowed his pride and love for power to warp his judgment. He rejected John's authority, spread about gossip and malicious words, and kicked out of the church anyone showing allegiance towards John. Though John stops just short of laying down Apostolic judgment, he makes it clear Diotrephes' actions are by nature evil and not of God.

Beyond the practical nature of this letter, in an overarching sense, 3rd John provides us an interesting look into the first century church. Though powerfully used by God, the church wasn't removed from personal conflict and petty differences.

OUTLINE FOR 3RD JOHN

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| GAIUS: GOOD EXAMPLE | 3 JOHN 1-8 |
| APPLIED THE THINGS HE HAD BEEN TAUGHT | |
| BROTHERLY LOVE WITH JOHN | |
| WALKED IN THE TRUTH | |
| GOOD REPUTATION OF GODLINESS | |
| LOVE MANIFESTED IN HOSPITALITY | |
| SERVICE WAS CHARACTERIZED BY FAITHFULNESS | |
| DIOTREPHESES: BAD EXAMPLE | 3 JOHN 9-10 |
| LOVED TO BE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT | |
| PRIDEFUL VIEW OF HIS OWN STATURE | |
| GOSSIP AND SLANDEROUS | |
| REJECT JOHN AND HIS DISCIPLES | |
| ABUSED HIS POWER AND POSITION | |
| CONCLUSION: KEEP ON KEEPING ON | 3 JOHN 11-14 |
| GOODNESS REVEALS GODLINESS | |
| GAIUS SHOULD CONTINUE HIS MINISTRY | |
| THEIR WERE STILL FRIENDS IN THE CHURCH | |



Day 1: Prosper....

3 John 2 // THINKING POINTS: (1). In what way is this verse often used to support heretical doctrine among the church? (2). What is the context John establishes for this comment? Is he making a doctrinal statement? (3). What does the word “prosper” mean? In what way does the Lord want you to “prosper in all things?”

Day 2: Looking at Gaius....

3 John 3-8 // THINKING POINTS: (1). Read through these verses and develop a character profile of Gaius. (2). What are some lessons you can learn from this man Gaius? (3). What was Gaius’ ministry and in what way did he go about accomplishing it?

Day 3: Looking at Diotrephes....

3 John 9-11 // THINKING POINTS: (1). Read through these verses and develop a character profile of Diotrephes. (2). What does John mean when he says that Diotrephes “loves to have the preeminence?” (3). What similar qualities do you share with Diotrephes?

Day 4: Prating....

3 John 10 // THINKING POINTS: (1). What is a modern word we typically translate “prating” into? (2). In the original language what mental image is used to describe gossip? How is this such a fitting picture of gossip? (3). In a practical sense, what does it mean to gossip about someone? Are you a gossip?

Day 5: Eternal Rep....

3 John 5-12 // THINKING POINTS: (1). In mentioning three separate individuals and honestly discussing their reputation and character, what overarching application can we draw from this? (2). Beyond Gaius and Diotrephes’ reputation getting back to the apostle John, what reality does this passage highlight? (3). Do you realize you have a reputation not only on earth, but in heaven? What kind of reputation do you want to have? What kind of reputation do you have?

Day 6: Conflict Resolution....

3 John 1-14 // THINKING POINT: (1). In a basic sense this letter was written by John to address conflict in the church. What were the various conflicts John addresses? (2). Read through the letter again this time focusing on the manner in which John proceeds to resolve conflict. What lessons do you learn from John’s example? (3). How should you handle someone who is spreading gossip about you?

DEVOTIONS

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