

The Third Epistle of John

INTRODUCTION

If the pastoral epistles were written to individuals but intended to be read in the churches, then 3 John and Philemon are the only letters in the New Testament which are written to individuals as personal correspondence.

Third John is written to a man named Gaius.

WRITER

the elder - same as Second John

BACKGROUND

John seems to be urging Gaius to show hospitality to Demetrius, vs 12, who was a traveling preacher, vs 5-8, and Demetrius was probably the bearer of the letter.

Diotrephes appears to have had authority in the church and would not accept Demetrius (or house him). vs 9-10

John is writing to request that Gaius see that he is taken care of.

Verse 9 "the church" indicates that both men belong to the same church.

OBSERVATION

John didn't write Diotrephes and correct him but looked to Gaius to meet the need. Maybe that "showing hospitality" must be done voluntarily or it doesn't count. John does call Diotrephes' action as evil and he intends to deal with it when he visits.

DATE

no way to determine

Vs 1 Lacks the usual wish for grace and peace.
 Gaius is referred to as "beloved" four times.
 vs 1,2,5,11
 John's love for Gaius was "in truth", genuine;
 and in accord with God's truth, John loved Gaius in truth

and Gaius was to show hospitality to Demetrius in that same truth. vs 8

Truth vs1,3,4,8,12 and love vs1,6 are central to all three of John's epistles.

Vs 2 John was pleased with Gaius' spiritual condition and hoped that he would prosper physically to the same extent (may be a foundation for praying for the physical well-being of others)

Vs 3 Gaius was
1. a man of the truth
2. walking in truth 2 Jn 4

A life lived consistent with a message

Vs 4 Same as 2 Jn 4
Little children by new birth or by adoption

Vs 5-12 The focus of the letter - showing hospitality to active ministers of the Gospel - contrast with 2 Jn 10-11 - make sure the true Gospel is their focus

Vs 5 Our responsibility to others who are believers; strangers
Believers who only care for friends who are believers - is covered in Luke, chapter 6

Vs 6 Word of Gaius' expressed love may have reached John's church (Jerusalem? depends on the date of writing)
Word of encouragement - continue with what you have begun!

Vs 7 These "good" missionaries had gone out "for the right reason" not soliciting support from the ones they were reaching.
Acts 20:33-35; 18:1-5

Vs 8 Such men are worthy of support.
When supported, we become co-workers with them

- Vs 9-11** Condemnation of Diotrephes
- Vs 9 The head of a church who likes to remind others who the head of the church is.
"beyond learning....already arrived"!
- Vs 10 When John arrives he will remind Diotrephes of his errors
1. unjustly accusing
 2. not doing what the Apostles say should be done
 3. forbids those he has power over to follow the Apostolic teaching - removing them from the church if they don't comply
- Vs 11 What Diotrephes does is "evil"
Apart from what might be argued
1. The one who does good is of God
 2. The one who does evil has not seen God
- Remember 2Jn 8-9
- Vs 12 Apart from what Diotrephes has said about Demetrius, he is worthy of support.
John's assessment of him:
1. He was well-spoken of by those who knew him
 2. The truth confirmed him
 3. The Apostles also spoke well of him
- Vs 13-14 CONCLUSION
The friends - Fellow believers never met before are friends in Christ.