

I. Introduction to the Epistles of 3 John

A. Occasion and Purpose

1. One of the shortest letters in the NT

a. less than 300 words

b. would have fit on a single papyrus

b. stress the importance and boundaries of loving in the truth

d. addresses the same historical events as 1 John

i. false teachers assaulting the congregations under John's care - vs 7

ii. Taking advantage of believers hospitality while spreading heresies

2. Occasion

a. the most personal of the 3 epistles

b. like 2 John, addresses issues of believers duty to show love and hospitality

i. where 2 John expresses the negative side - don't show hospitality to false teachers,

ii. 3 John expresses the positive counterpart all who embrace truth are to be loved and cared for.

c. John writes about Diotrephes

i. Gaius is the pastor of the church of which Diotrephes is a member

- Diotrephes wouldn't show hospitality to itinerant preachers

- He also excommunicated those who defied him to show them hospitality

- John promised to deal personally with Diotrephes

ii. John writes to encourage Gaius to remain loyal to the truth by showing hospitality to strangers

B. Author, Date, and Place of Writing

1. most likely written from by John Ephesus 90-95 A.D.

2. style, structure, and vocabulary closely parallel 2 John

a. Vs 1 - 2 Jo 1

b. Vs 4 - 2 Jo 4

c. Vs 13 - 2 Jo 12

d. Vs 14 - 2 Jo 12

II. Sacrificial Love for Those Faithful to the Truth - vs 1-8

A. Introduction

1. THE ELDER

a. deals with the office, not his age

b. though by now he is very old

2. To the beloved Gaius

a. not much known about him

i. to the beloved - apparently well known and appreciated in the church

ii. John personally knew him

b. a variety of their men in NT with his name

i. Ac 19:29; 20:4; Ro 16:23; 1 Co 1:14 - impossible to identify

ii. One of the most common names in Roman society

c. whom I love in truth - the common sphere in which biblical love is shared

B. John's Concern for Gaius - vs 2

1. I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health

a. prosper

i. *euodoo* - to help on the road, succeed in reaching; to succeed in business affairs:--(have a) prosper(-ous journey).

ii. Used only here and Ro 1:10; 1 Co 16:2

b. First use here is of health

i. John's desire is that Gaius would be free from difficulties that would prevent him from serving the Lord

ii. Much like

-God's concern for the health of His people in the OT law concerning hygiene - De 23:13

- Paul's concern for Timothy - 1 Tim 5:23

2. just as your soul prospers

a. John took pleasure knowing that Gaius had a vibrant spiritual life

b. Gaius was among those that were sound in faith - Tit 1:13

C. John's Commendation of Gaius - vs 3-6a

1. For I rejoiced greatly - I was very glad

a. when brethren came and testified of the truth

i. probably some of the itinerant preachers to whom Gaius had shown hospitality

ii. They gave testimony of his love

b. that is in you, just as you walk in the truth.

i. walking refers to daily conduct in the NT

ii. Gaius' daily conduct followed a pattern that was consistent w/ truth

- hospitality is a manifestation of love

- of course Gaius was contrasted to Diotrephes - vs 9-10

2. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. - 2 Jo 4

a. the goal of a pastor is

i. not just to teach the truth

ii. not to have people understand the truth

iii. to believe, love, and obey the truth

b. the writer of Hebrews exhorts people to submit to their leaders b/c they watch for your souls as those who will give an account - 13:17

3. Gaius obedience spelled out

a. you do faithfully whatever you do

b. for the brethren and for strangers, - he didn't know some of those he helped

c. they testified to the church about him - who have borne witness of your love before the church. - Ro 12:13

D. John's Counsel to Gaius - vs 6b-8

1. For the future

a. you will do well, - an idiomatic expression in Greek equivalent to modern day "please"

b. send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God,

i. refreshed - rested and fed

ii. fully supplied for the next leg of their journey

2. Considering their mode of service

a. because they went forth for His name's sake,

i. the name represents all that He is

ii. Includes His works

b. taking nothing from the Gentiles - one wouldn't expect support from unbelievers

3. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.

a. receiving such - supporting them - hospitality

b. fellow workers - participants in their ministry - Mt 10:41; Phil 4:17