

Support the Brethren

July 22, 2018 ~ 3 John

Similarities of 2 John and 3 John

❖ vss 1–4 ~ Greetings

1. Each letter starts with "The Elder"
2. Word "truth" used 5 and 4 times / "love in truth", "walk in truth"
3. Both greetings include "rejoice greatly"

❖ Last 2 vss ~ Farewells

1. Practically identical / "many things to write" but not "with paper/pen and ink"
2. He wants to "speak face to face" with them
3. Greetings from family & friends

❖ Content also similar in structure

1. First part defines standard to judge people and actions (vss 5-6 and vss 5-8)
2. Second part introduces a villain (vss 7 "antichrist" and vss 9 "Diotrephes")
3. Third part instructs reader how to oppose villainy (vss 10-11 and vss 11-12)

4 Differences of 2 John and 3 John

1. 2 John written to woman / 3 John written to man
2. 2 John written to lay person / 3 John written to an elder
3. 2 John omits mentioning church / 3 John mentions issues in church
4. 2 John condemns hospitality to heretics / 3 John commends hospitality to faithful

v1a ~ "The Elder, to the beloved Gaius"

❖ WWWWW question / "Who was Gaius?" / Too common of name to assume

✧ Context presumes Gaius to be a man of:

- ✧ Faith – he assisted brethren (v3,5) he didn't know on missionary journey
- ✧ Means – he owns a home that houses many and provides food for them
- ✧ Poor health – Unique blessing of v2 ~ Report may have come of poor health
- ✧ Authority – Doing this despite leader of church (v10) opposing practice
- ✧ Influence – John entrusting him with very personal views of Demetrius (v9)

❖ Many believe Gaius an elder

✧ "But is he in the same church or a different church?"

- ✧ Same ~ ("the church" in v9) ~ But maybe sickly and remote
- ✧ Different ~ Church not church ~ Neighboring elder (different "church")

Xition: Why did John describe Gaius as "beloved"?

v1b ~ ".. to the beloved Gaius"

- ❖ John uses term 4x in 14 verses / 5x in 105 verses of 1 John / none elsewhere
- ❖ Did John think it inappropriate to refer to the "elect lady" as beloved?
 - ✧ Perhaps, but John appears to know Gaius much more deeply than her
 - ◆ In **v4** he includes him as one of "his children" / He led him to the Lord?

v1c-4 ~ ".. whom I love in truth .. walk in truth"

- ❖ This phrase "in truth" doesn't mean that John really loves Gaius
- ❖ Christians love one another because of a common bond / a shared reality
 - ✧ This truth is in us – and we abide in it – think of it as a place / "seated in heaven"
 - ✧ In the world we'll hear lies / We won't know what to believe in the world
 - ✧ But when we're in Christ we abide in an unchanging reality / "tossed about"
- ❖ God loves just weights and measures ~ They mark a good society
 - ✧ **Lev 19.35-36a** ~ "'You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. ³⁶ You shall have honest scales, honest weights, .."
 - ✧ **Mic 6.11** ~ "Shall I count pure *those* with the wicked scales, and with the bag of deceitful weights?"
- ❖ **III: Drug scales** ~ People carried their own in my youth
- ❖ **III: Measuring America** – Read excerpts from **pgs 23-24**
- ❖ Christians, who have the truth in them, cannot be cheated
 - ✧ God has implanted a "lie detector" within us (Holy Spirit)
 - ✧ He's also given us a perfect "ruler" by which to measure all things (His Word)

John Commends Gaius for Assisting Missionaries (vss 5-6)

- ❖ **v5** ~ John commends Gaius for faithful service to brethren & strangers
- ❖ **v6a** ~ John says they've "borne witness of your love before the church"
 - ✧ This may have been their local church or the Church in general
- ❖ John then defines a proper mission, how it's to be supported, and why it's important

3 Rules to Support Missionaries

- ❖ **Read v6b-8** ~ "If you send them .. workers for the truth"
- ❖ John makes 3 important points about missions:
 1. Believers are to "send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God"
 2. They're not to be supported by unsaved ~ "taking nothing from the Gentiles"
 3. Believers are to receive them to "become fellow workers for the truth"

Xition: These are pretty clear, but do we abide by them . . . ?

3 Failures to Support Missionaries

1. We're to send them forth "in a manner worthy of God"
 - ✧ Sometimes this is the case / But sometimes it's not
 - ✧ Missionaries tell stories of receiving horrible gifts from churches
 - ✧ Instead of giving missionaries their best – people give them their castoffs
2. Missionaries are to take "nothing from the Gentiles"
 - ✧ Cults especially violate this / Moonies, JWs, Hare Krishna's
 - ✧ Churches do too / "Seeker sensitive" Sunday services take \$ from unbelievers
 - ◇ They refuse to preach whole gospel to them on Sunday / Wednesdays only
 - ◇ But willing to take their collections on Sunday to fund building program
3. Believers are to "receive" them in their homes
 - ✧ But as a culture this practice of hospitality is dying out
 - ✧ Our wealth makes us unwilling to house them / don't want to be housed
 - ✧ This is true with family & friends as well – "But is it our hearts?"

Enter the Villain - Diotrephes

- ❖ John introduced the standard to be obeyed (*commended Gaius*)
- ❖ Now he introduces the villain to be opposed
- ❖ **Read v9-10** ~ "I wrote to the church .. out of the church"
 - ✧ Diotrephes was not a common name / It means "child of Zeus" / aristocratic
- ❖ John accuses him of 6 things reflecting pride and arrogance
 1. **v9** ~ "loves to have the preeminence among them" (*proud*)
 2. **v9** ~ "does not receive us" (*rebellious*)
 3. **v10** ~ "prating against us with malicious words" (*slanderer*)
 4. **v10** ~ "he himself does not receive the brethren" (*hard hearted*)
 5. **v10** ~ "forbids those who wish to" (*overbearing*)
 6. **v10** ~ "putting them out of the church" (*abusive*)
- ❖ John states at start of **v10** that he will oppose him if he comes
 - ✧ John qualifies with "if I come" based on potential visit (**v14**)
 - ✧ Some think this hints at official function such as Jerusalem Council (*Acts 15*)
- ❖ Gaius thought to be elder because of John's candor / No way shared with layman
 - ✧ Elders must hold other elders accountable
 - ✧ **!!!: OPC Picnic** ~ OPC teaching elder behaving badly (abusive / aggressive)

Xition: Now for last part of main body – advice to oppose villain . . .

John Gives Advice

- ❖ John now upholds the standard and opposes the villain with his advice
- ❖ **Read v11** ~ "Beloved, do not imitate .. has not seen God"
- ❖ **Note:** John doesn't call Diotrephes a deceiver or an antichrist as in **2 John**
 - ✧ He'd just stated 6 aspects of very poor character (*esp elder*)
 - ✧ Yet, note caution of **v11** ~ "Beloved, do not imitate .. has not seen God"
 - ✧ John pointed out poor character of Diotrephes then God's standard
 - ✧ He's allowing Gaius to draw his own conclusions from what's been shared
 - ✧ Next week in **Jude v9** we'll see a similarity c/Michael the archangel
- ❖ John cannot act unilaterally (*he'd exceed his authority like Diotrephes has done*)
 - ✧ **Note:** John didn't forbid "elect lady" from hospitality / He "plead" with her
 - ✧ But he can act with authority – when he's empowered to do so
 - ✧ **Q:** Marshall commentary ~ "It is not Christian to refrain from exercising legitimate authority when there is need to do so; the modern church is perhaps too reluctant in exercising brotherly admonition and even discipline when it is required." ~ from I. Howard Marshall "The Epistles of John" commentary

Please Treat Demetrius Well

- ❖ **Read v12** ~ "Demetrius has a good .. our testimony is true"
- ❖ Many believe this man brought the letter and is seeking support
 - ✧ John may have been rebuffed by Diotrephes seeking support for him
- ❖ John commends Demetrius to Gaius on 3 accounts:
 1. **v12** ~ "has a good testimony from all" / good reputation
 2. **v12** ~ "from the truth itself" / you'll find this to be the case
 3. **v12** ~ "we also bear witness" / you have our word on it

- John closes letter hoping to see Gaius soon
- God grants us all opportunities to share in the work of missionaries / support
- Supporting our brethren will always involve sacrifice (**time, money, privacy**)
- But let us support them "in a manner worthy of God"

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .

Support the Brethren Handout

July 22, 2018

~

3 John

- List 2 similarities between 2nd and 3rd John: 1) _____,
2) _____
- List 3 differences between 2nd and 3rd John: 1) _____,
2) _____, and 3) _____.
- What are 5 inferences drawn about Gaius from the context of 3rd John? 1) _____
_____, 2) _____, 3) _____
_____, 4) _____, and 5) _____.
- What is a logical reason to assume that Gaius was an elder: _____

- Why might John refer to Gaius as one of "his children"? _____
- To what was the Holy Spirit compared? _____
- To what was the Word of God compared? _____
- What 3 important points did John make about supporting missions? 1) _____
_____, 2) _____,
and 3) _____
- Do you feel you honor these principles personally? _____
List an example? _____
- Name the villain of our story: _____
- Name 4 of his actions that reflect poorly on him: 1) _____,
2) _____, 3) _____
_____, and 4) _____
- John never called our villain a deceiver or an antichrist as he called the villain in 2nd John. Why do you think that is? _____
- Might our villain have been a believer – just a badly behaving one? _____
- Can you name others in Scripture that may have been believers, but behaved like villains at times?

Can you name the famous villains?

