

3 JOHN

Introduction

Author. The author is John, the apostle. See Introduction to 1 & 2 John.

Date. The probable date is between 85 and 90 A. D.

Occasion. See *Occasion* to 1 and 2 John. The best conjecture is that both 2nd and 3rd John were short notes attached to specific individuals along the route which the messenger would carry 1 John. Evidently some travelling preachers, who may have been sent out by John himself (vs. 9), had gone to the Church where Gaius was a member and had been refused by a self-proclaimed leader in the church, Diotrephes. Diotrephes had not only refused to welcome these men but also attempted to put others out of the Church who were inclined to support them. Gaius, evidently, had extended hospitality to the rejected preachers and thus drew the commendation of the apostle. Thus, John writes to commend Gaius, indirectly rebuke Diotrephes, and perhaps prepare the way for Demetrius, a preacher on the way to the church where Gaius was a member.

Message Statement. *Walking in the truth is demonstrated by supporting brothers.*

Argument

- 1A SALUTATION 1-4
John again identifies himself as the "elder" a reference to his age. He states his joy over Gaius' reception of the itinerant preachers. Gaius' actions were evidently a tangible test of his love for the truth which elicits great joy in the heart of the apostle.
- 1B THE OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT TRAVELLING PREACHERS 5-12
John states his basic point in the first few verses of this section as he commends Gaius. He draws the connection between hospitality and service when he says "We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men *so that we may work together for the truth*" (vs. 8). Of this positive trait, Diotrephes is the negative example. His refusal to accept the brothers and his gossip about John will receive personal rebuke later. At this point, John commends another travelling preacher, Demetrius, whom Gaius will evidently support as well.
- 1C CONCLUSION 13-14
A similar conclusion is found in 2 John which also argues for a similar occasion of the epistles. Again, John hopes to come in person, indicating that his exile on Patmos had probably not yet begun.

