

3 John

Introduction:

1. This lesson is a study of 3 John.
2. Although this letter is brief, it contains valuable information.

Discussion:

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. The writer of this letter is not revealed by name.
 1. He referred to himself as "*the elder*" [one of advanced age] (vs.1).
 2. A number of uninspired sources identify the apostle John as the writer.
- B. This letter was addressed to Gaius (vs.1).
 1. John and Gaius had a special relationship.
 - a. John loved Gaius "*in the truth*" (vs.1).
 - b. John referred to Gaius as "beloved" 4 times (vs.1, 2, 5, 11).
 2. John highly commended Gaius for his spirituality (vs.2), walking in the truth (vs.3-4), and showing hospitality to others (vs.5-8).
 3. John instructed Gaius to follow good examples rather than evil (vs.11).
 - a. Diotrophes stands out as an evil example (vs.9-10).
 - b. Demetrius stands out as a good example (vs.12).
 4. John hoped to visit Gaius personally in the near future (vs.13-14).

II. OUTLINE

- A. (vs.1) Signature and salutation
- B. (vs.2-4) Prayer for Gaius' prosperity and health, and thanksgiving for his faithfulness and that of John's disciples
- C. (vs.5-8) Instructions for Gaius' service to missionaries
- D. (vs.9a) Reference to a previous letter to the church
- E. (vs.9b-10) Diotrophes' tyrannical behavior and John's plans for chastising him
- F. (vs.11) Admonition of Gaius to godly living
- G. (vs.12) Endorsement of Demetrius
- H. (vs.13-14) Conclusion

III. IMPORTANT POINTS OF INFORMATION REVEALED IN 3 JOHN

- A. Our spiritual welfare is more important than our physical and material welfare (vs.2).
 1. Gaius' soul prospered so well that John wished he could equally prosper materially and physically.
 2. The Bible repeatedly warns against placing too much emphasis on material prosperity (Matthew 16:26; Luke 12:15; 1 Timothy 4:8).
- B. Hospitality is to be shown to those who labor in the truth (vs.5-8).
 1. According to 2 John 10-11, those who show hospitality to false teachers are "partakers in their evil deeds."
 2. However, those who show hospitality to faithful teachers are "*fellowhelpers to the truth.*"
- C. Diotrophes' conduct was sinful, and it is to be avoided (vs.9-10).
 1. His main problem was that he loved to have "the preeminence" [to be first].
 2. This is a serious error (1 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:18).
 3. Because of his desire for preeminence, Diotrophes:
 - a. rejected the message that John had written to the church
 - b. used malicious words to bring false accusations against John and his co-workers
 - c. would not receive the brethren who delivered the message from John
 - d. cast out of the church those who received the brethren sent by John.
- D. Demetrius' conduct was righteous, and it is to be imitated (vs.12).
 1. He had a "*good report of all men, and of the truth itself.*"
 2. The way to achieve true greatness in God's kingdom is revealed in Matthew 20:25-28.
- E. Christians should know one another (vs.14b).