



3 John



THRU**the**BIBLE

NOTES & OUTLINES WITH

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EPISTLES



3 John

WRITER: John the Apostle

DATE: A.D. 90—100

PERSONALITIES: This is a letter similar to John’s second epistle, in that it is personal in character, and it carries the same theme of *truth*. However, this letter deals with personalities, which will be noted in the outline. In his second epistle, John says that *truth* is worth standing for; in the third epistle that *truth* is worth working for.

OUTLINE:

- I. **Gaius, beloved brother in the early church, vv. 1–8**
(Gaius, the one to whom the letter is addressed, is urged to extend hospitality to true teachers of the Word.)
- II. **Diotrephes, “who loveth to have the pre-eminence,” vv. 9–11**
(Evil deeds are an expression of false doctrine.)
- III. **Demetrius “hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself,” vv. 12–14**
(A good life is an expression of true doctrine.)

COMMENT:

I. Gaius, beloved brother in the early church, vv. 1–8

V. 1–“Elder” (see 2 John 1).

“Gaius the beloved” is a better form of address. John calls him “the beloved” four times (verses 1, 2, 5, 11).

“In truth” (omit the article) means *genuinely*.

V. 2–John prayed for his physical and material welfare.

V. 3–The first “the truth” is the *doctrine* and *teaching* of the apostles. Omit the article for the second “truth,” which means *conduct*.

V. 4–“My children”—perhaps Gaius was a convert of John’s.

“Walk in truth”—conduct conforms to doctrine.

V. 5–8—He commends Gaius for having received and entertained the true teachers of the Word. In 2 John, the apostle warns against receiving false teachers. In 3 John, he encourages the believers to receive the true brethren.

II. Diotrephes, “who loveth to have the pre-eminence,” vv. 9–11

The missionaries of the early church were itinerants. They went from place to place. Since the local inn was a wretched and dirty place and there were no Holiday Inns or Howard Johnson Motels, these missionaries were entertained in the homes of believers. Gaius opened his home, for which John congratulates him. Diotrephes opposed this practice, and John censures him for it. Diotrephes’ “hang-up” was that he loved to have recognition, attention, and be the center of attraction. He had to rule or ruin. There is generally one like him in every church who wants to control the church and the preacher. He was guilty on five charges:

1 - Must occupy the leading place

2 - Actually refused to receive John

3 - Made malicious statements against the apostles

4 - Refused to entertain the missionaries (apparently he wanted to do the teaching)

5 - Excommunicated those who did entertain the missionaries
(he tried to be the first Pope)

He was Diotrephes, the dictator.

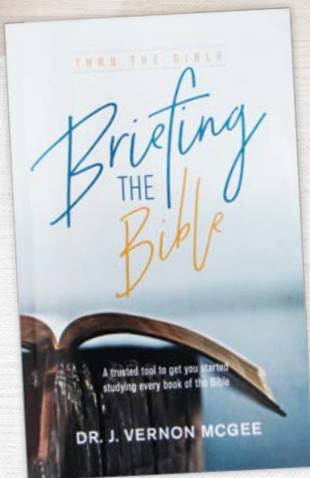
III. Demetrius “hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself,” vv. 12–14

V. 12—While there is only one verse about Demetrius, it gives us an insight into the Christian character of this noble saint of God. We cannot identify him with any other of the same name. His name means *belonging to Demeter* (Ceres, god of agriculture), which identifies him as a convert from paganism. He adorned the doctrine of Christ. Others testified to his character. He was true to the doctrine.

Christianity was on trial in the first century. Three men pass before us in this little epistle. Two were genuine, one was a phony. The gospel walked in shoe leather in pagan Rome.

W. 13, 14—John would have written a longer letter, but he was coming to visit his friend, Gaius.

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