

The Teachings of 3 John

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The Teachings of 3 John

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Introduction

One of the ways I've been studying the Word of God is by making a list of everything that each book of the Bible teaches. This has resulted in more than a thousand pages of material. Although it's interesting and I've learned a lot from writing it, that's a lot of bullet points to read through!

This isn't intended to summarize each book of the Bible because that's what my "Chapter Summary of the Bible" is for. It's also not intended to offer in-depth commentary because that's what my regular commentary is for. This book is simply a collection of points that I found interesting.

I hope there's some material here that you find edifying.

Jon Cooper
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3 John 1

3 John 1:1: "The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth."

- The book of 3 John was written by the apostle John to a person named Gaius.
- The apostle John referred to himself as "the elder" when this book was written (probably because he wrote it at the end of his life, when he was old).
- John called Gaius "wellbeloved" and said that he loved him "in the truth".
- Love needs to be accompanied by truth.

3 John 1:2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

- The apostle John wished "above all things" that Gaius would prosper and be in good health.
- It's not a sin to wish that the saints of God would prosper, or have good health.
- God didn't command His people to take a vow of poverty, which can be seen by the fact that John wanted Gaius to prosper in the material things of this world.
- Even though Gaius may not have had much material wealth or health, his soul prospered.
- It's possible for our soul to prosper and be in good health even if we're poor or sick.

3 John 1:3: "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth."

- The apostle John rejoiced greatly when he learned that Gaius walked in the truth.
- It's important for us to walk in the truth. When that happens it's a cause for rejoicing.
- John was visited by brethren who knew Gaius, who testified that he walked in the truth.
- John knew that the truth was in Gaius because he demonstrated it by walking in the truth.
- Since the brethren came to John and specifically testified of Gaius, that means Gaius must have been a real person.

3 John 1:4: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

- The apostle John said that his greatest joy was that other people would walk in the truth.
- John referred to other believers as his children.
- The truth was very important to the apostle John.

3 John 1:5: "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;"

- John was pleased because Gaius acted faithfully toward those who were within the church, and those who were outside of it.
- John didn't think it was inappropriate to express sincere love toward others or call them "beloved". It wasn't

viewed in a romantic light.

3 John 1:6: "Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:"

- The brethren testified to John that Gaius demonstrated charity in the presence of the church.
- The apostles received reports about good and bad things that went on in the churches, and they responded to those reports.
- Since Gaius demonstrated charity before the church, this means that Gaius was most likely a specific person and not a metaphor for the church.
- The apostles didn't believe that what happened within a church was a private matter that shouldn't be discussed with those who didn't attend that specific church.
- John encouraged Gaius to help other people on their journeys, as long as they were doing good.
- It's good to show charity by helping the saints carry out their godly missions.
- It's good to recognize and encourage people who are doing good.
- It's good to hear reports of what's going on in other churches.

3 John 1:7: "Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles."

- The people Gaius helped had gone on a journey for the

sake of Christ.

- Gaius helped missionaries spread the gospel to the Gentiles by financially supporting them, so they wouldn't have to raise money from the Gentiles themselves.
- It's good for churches to financially support missionaries so that those missionaries don't have to put a financial burden on the people they're preaching to.
- It's good to recognize and encourage churches that financially support missionaries.

3 John 1:8: "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth."

- Churches have a responsibility to receive and help missionaries.
- Churches that help missionaries are "fellowhelpers to the truth".
- John was holding up Gaius as an example to follow, because he received missionaries and helped them on their journey.

3 John 1:9: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not."

- Diotrephes refused to receive the apostle John.
- John called out an evildoer by name and condemned him.
- John didn't believe it was wrong to call out evildoers by name and publicly rebuke them for something they did within the context of a specific church.

- John didn't believe in hiding the sins that were going on in a church. Instead he publicly rebuked them.
- Diotrephes refused to receive John because he was proud. He wanted to have preeminence among them.
- Diotrephes cared more about pride and himself than spreading the truth of the gospel to the Gentiles.
- John wrote to the church before he wrote this letter, but he was rejected.

3 John 1:10: "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

- John said that if he visited that church in person he would remember the evil deeds of Diotrephes.
- John didn't hide the evil things that Diotrephes had done, but instead publicly rebuked him for it. He made sure that everyone knew the evil things Diotrephes was doing, and condemned his deeds as a sin.
- John didn't follow the Matthew 18 procedure for reconciling with Diotrephes because this wasn't a private matter between Diotrephes and himself. Instead it was a public matter because Diotrephes was casting people out of the church and refusing to receive missionaries.
- John condemned Diotrephes for speaking maliciously.
- Not only did Diotrephes refuse to receive missionaries, but he cast out believers who *did* receive them. John condemned him for this wicked behavior.

3 John 1:11: "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."

- John commands us to follow that which is good, not that which is evil.
- We must not follow evil examples or give in to them.
- Those who do good are of God. Their works demonstrate their faith.
- Those who do evil haven't seen God. Their works demonstrate that they lack faith and haven't been saved.
- You can tell if a person's faith is genuine by their actions. Those who do good are of God, and those who do evil are not.
- John implies that those who do good have seen God.
- John didn't say that Gaius should work with Diotrephes or find some way to appease him. Instead John condemned Diotrephes and said we should do what is good, not what is evil.

3 John 1:12: "Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true."

- The apostle John called out by name a person in the church who did evil (Diotrephes), and a person who did good (Demetrius).
- John listened to reports from brethren who came to visit him, who told him of good and evil things that were being done in the churches. John didn't rebuke these

messengers for talking about church scandals.

- John praises Demetrius for having a good report, and for walking in the truth.
- John says that his record is true.
- John praised those who deserved to be praised, and condemned those who deserved to be condemned. He did both by name. He left no doubt about who he was talking about or what those individuals had done.
- John didn't believe it was wrong to publicly condemn a church member when that person did something wrong.

3 John 1:13: "I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:"

- John had many things to tell Gaius, but he didn't want to write them in a letter.
- John used ink and pen to write his letters.
- John must have believed that the sin of Diotrephes was so severe that it couldn't wait for him to make a trip to the church, and had to be dealt with immediately in a letter.

3 John 1:14: "But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name."

- John was hoping that he would soon be able to visit Gaius in person.
- John wanted to speak to Gaius face to face, and tell him everything that he wanted to talk about.

- John said that the friends who were with him also sent their greetings to Gaius.
- John specifically asked Gaius to greet friends by name.
- John wished peace upon Gaius (not suffering, pain, tribulation, and death).
- John placed great value in seeing people in person so he could talk with them face to face.