

THREE MEN IN THIRD JOHN - WHICH MAN ARE YOU?

III John 1:1-14, "The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. (2) Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. (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. (4) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (5) Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; (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: (7) Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. (8) We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth. (9) I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. (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. (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. (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. (13) I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: (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 WROTE THREE EPISTLES.

Among his five N.T. books, John wrote three epistles: the first one to Christians in general; the second one to an individual, an unnamed lady; and this third one to a Christian gentleman, Gaius.

In his first two letters, John instructed: "Love one another". In this third letter, he demonstrates in the person of Gaius how it should be done.

SECOND SHORTEST BOOK.

This third epistle contains 14 verses, one verse more than in Second John, but four words less. The first verse is the introduction and the last two verses are the conclusion.

III JOHN SPEAKS OF THREE TYPICAL MEN IN EVERY CHURCH.

This third letter is built around those three men:

The first is Gaius in verse 1;

The second is Diotrephes in verse 9;

The third is Demetrius in verse 12.

These three men are found in virtually every true Christian church in the world.

There are three men in the New Testament called Gaius. Two of them are found in Acts 19 and 20. In Acts 19:29, we read: "The whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia." Macedonia was a province or state in Europe, so this is Gaius of Macedonia.

In Acts 20:4, we find the second Gaius, who was one of the men who accompanied Paul from Europe to Asia: "These accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe." Derbe was a city in Asia in the province of Lycaonia (Acts 14:6). So these two men named Gaius are not the same man.

In I Corinthians 1:14, we meet the third Gaius: "I thank God that I baptized none of you (Corinthians), but Crispus and Gaius." The Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth where this Gaius lived.

In Romans 16:23, we read: "Gaius, mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you". The whole church? Yes, Paul said, we all meet at Gaius' house. His house is always open. He is the hospitable one. This is the Gaius of III John.

GRACIOUS AND GODLY GAIUS. vs. 1-8.

A. GAIUS WAS DEARLY LOVED. VS 1.

"The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth."

B. GAIUS WAS PRAYED FOR. VS 2.

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

C. GAIUS WAS RESPECTED. VS. 3-4.

III 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. (4) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

D. GAIUS WAS GENEROUS. VS. 5-7.

III John 1:5, "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; (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: (7) Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles."

E. GAIUS WAS A ROLE MODEL. VS. 8.

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

DICTATORIAL DIOTREPHES. VS. 9-11.

A. DIOTREPHES WAS A CARNAL CHRISTIAN. VS. 9.

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

B. DIOTREPHES WAS DEVILISH. VS. 10.

III 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."

C. DIOTREPHES WAS A BAD ROLE MODEL. VS. 11.

III 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."

Brian Hill, Founder/Executive Director of the Oral Cancer Foundation, said a celebrity is badly needed to speak to America's youth about the link between oral sex and cancer. Science now tells us that the reduction in smoking among America's youth had started a downward spiral in youth cancer until recently when an epidemic of oral sex among middle and high school young people has sent it upward again. Renowned journalist Cliff Kincaid has suggested that former President Bill Clinton should assume that role since it is generally believed that he, more than anyone else, started the epidemic while serving as President through his personal behavior.

DEPENDABLE DEMETRIUS. VS. 12-14.

A. DEMETRIUS HAD A GOOD TESTIMONY. VS. 12.

III 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."

CONCLUSION: VS. 13-14.

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

As I discussed at the conclusion of the Second Epistle of John, there are two kinds of spiritual (and otherwise) communication:

Paper and ink communication is important. Today, this would include E-mail, faxes, letters, UPS, FedEx, telephone calls, shortwave radio, audio and videocassettes etc and etc. John knew nothing about all of this. A letter for John was a big deal, both in writing and delivery.

Face to face communication is even more important. We all need the face to face ministry of others. We are not called to be hermits. We are called to be communicators... witnesses. The local church is God's answer to this need. Every believer should be an actively-participating member of a Bible-believing and preaching church... and in that local church should invest time, talents and tithes.