

The Third Epistle of John

The book of 3 John was written by the Apostle John who called himself “the elder.” It is closely related to the books of 1 and 2 John (see introductions to these books) in that they deal with similar subjects and were all written about the same time (ca. A.S. 85-90). John addressed this letter to Gaius, a leader in the congregation of a church that John had most likely helped to establish. The purpose of this epistle was to encourage Gaius to continue to help those who were spreading the gospel and teaching the truth (3 John 1:5-8). John also wanted to express his displeasure about the offensive behavior of Diotrephes, a man who refused to accept John and was mistreating other believers (3 John 1:9). Furthermore, he revealed his intention to visit the church there himself and reprove this selfish and indifferent man to his face (3 John 1:10). (Key Word Bible, page 1554)

CHAPTER I

¹The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

Originally from Macedonia, Gaius was one of Paul’s companions who was caught during a riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:9). He was also among those who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem, perhaps as an official delegate of the church in Derbe, and was a member of the party which awaited Paul at Troas (Acts 20: 4- 5). He was baptized by Paul in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14). His house was used as a regular meeting place for the congregation; in fact, Paul stayed with him during one of his visits to Corinth (Rom. 16:23). John is commending Gaius for his good hospitality, as well as expressing his desire to see him shortly (3 John 1:14). (Key Word Bible, page 1554)

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

There are some misapply this verse to mean that it is God’s will for His children to always prosper and be in good health, which would give credence to the belief in a “health and wealth gospel.” However, the writer is conveying nothing more than a wish to Gaius that this letter might find him well and in good health.

*There are several words in this verse that are mistranslated in the KJV. For instance, the preposition *peri* (4012) should be rendered “concerning” or “about,” rather than “above.” John is not stating that prosperity and wealth should be considered the important priorities of one’s life. The verb *euchomai* (2172) merely expresses a wish to the promise of an Apostle to a fellow believer. The word translated “prosper” is *euodousgthai* (a present infinitive from *euodoo* [2137]). Essentially, this word means to have a good and safe journey throughout one’s life (cf. Rom. 1:10). In 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul used it in regard to God’s benevolence toward Christians. Although it is translated “as God hath prospered him,” one should accept the idea*

that prospering does not necessarily mean to gain riches. Rather, one should understand that the Lord will make sufficient provision for the believer's material needs and the idea of wealth should not be interpreted here. The third word of importance in this verse is hugiananein (5198), "to be healthy." Likewise, this is not a guarantee that Gaius is going to be healthy, but simply a wish. (Key Word Bible, page 1554)

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

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

Concerning Helping Others

⁵Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

⁶Which 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:

⁷Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

⁸We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

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

Diotrephes was an ambitious person who resisted the authority of the elders in the church. He attacked them publicly, and forbade the reception of John and his adherents. Also, whether by formal excommunication or physical violence, he excluded those who received them. (Key Word Bible, page 1555)

¹⁰Wherefore, 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.

¹¹Beloved, 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.

¹²Demetrius 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.

Benediction

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

¹⁴But 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.

Reference

Hebrew – Greek Key Word Study Bible, Key insights into God’s Word, King James Version, 2nd Revised Edition, AMG Publishers ISBN 978-0-89957-745-6

Strong’s Comprehensive Concordance of the Bible, Word Bible Publishers, Inc, Iowa Falls, Iowa, ISBN 0-529-06334-4