

3 John

- Theme:** Entertaining the Right Visitors with Christian Love
- Author:** Apostle John
- Recipients:** “The beloved Gaius” (v. 1).
- Date of Writing:** A.D. 85-100
- Place of Writing:** Ephesus (?)
- Occasion:** The need to commend Gaius and condemn Diotrephes
- Purposes:**
1. To praise Gaius for his commendable behavior.
 2. To condemn Diotrephes for his conceited behavior.
 3. To honor Demetrius for his consistent behavior.

3 John

Theme: True Love in Action

Major Concern: Appropriate Hospitality in the Ancient World

	Gaius: A Commendable Christian	Diotrephes: A Conceited Christian (?)	Demetrius: A Consistent Christian	John: A Caring Christian				
	Live Spiritually (1-2)	Prideful Ambition (9)	A Godly Example (11)	Presence of Believers (13)				
	Walk Truthfully (3-4)	Pompous Arrogance (9)	A Good Testimony (12)	Peace for Believers (14)				
	Serve Faithfully (5-6)	Perverse Accusations (10)						
	Minister Generously (7-8)	Profane Activity (10)						
	1	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Focus →	Conduct	Confrontation	Challenge	Concern				

Key Words: Love, Truth, Brethren, Testify (Witness), Walk, Receive, Good, Evil

Introduction to 3 John

I. Author

In both 2 and 3 John, the author identifies himself simply as “the elder.” Most likely, “the elder” is John, the apostle of Jesus and brother of James.

II. Date

Along with the first two epistles, 3 John is normally dated between A.D. 85-100.

III. Purpose

Like 2 John, 3 John is concerned with the reception of itinerant missionaries/teachers. However, these letters address different problems (see the chart below). 2 John cautions believers about receiving false teachers. By contrast, 3 John criticizes those who refuse to accept instructors of the true gospel. This letter contains three personal names—Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius. The author applauds the hospitality shown by Gaius toward traveling Christians. On the other hand, Diotrephes is rebuked for refusing to welcome these people. The slight given by Diotrephes to these missionaries from John would have been scandalous in the first century Mediterranean world with their understanding of hospitality, honor and shame. Demetrius, who is mentioned briefly (v. 12), is also praised, and he probably delivered the letter.

Contrasting 2 John and 3 John

2 John

Written to a lady and her children

Written to one who was entertaining the wrong visitors

Need was for love to be balanced by truth

Truth is the key

No personal names (1 John also)

3 John

Written to a man and his acquaintances

Written about one who was refusing to entertain the right visitors

Need was for truth (?) to be balanced by love

Love (hospitality) is the key

Three personal names:

Gaius

Diotrephes

Demetrius

“Four Men and Their Reputations”

3 John 1-14

I. Gaius is a Commendable Christian (1-8)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1. Live spiritually | 1-2 |
| 2. Walk truthfully | 3-4 |
| 3. Serve faithfully | 5-6 |
| 4. Minister generously | 7-8 |

II. Diotrephes is a Conceited Christian (?) (9-10)

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Do not be drive by prideful ambition | 9 |
| 2. Do not display pompous arrogance | 9 |
| 3. Do not deliver perverse accusations | 10 |
| 4. Do not dominate with profane activity | 10 |

III. Demetrius is a Consistent Christian (11-12)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| 1. Pursue a godly example | 11 |
| 2. Possess a good testimony | 12 |

IV. John is a Caring Christian (13-14)

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Desire the presence of fellow believers | 13 |
| 2. Desire the peace for fellow believers | 14 |