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## 3 John

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# 3 John

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## A. Overview and Summary

1. The author is the Apostle John, and this is the third epistle he wrote. Like 2nd John, it is very short, consisting of less than 300 Greek words, which would have allowed it to be placed on one papyrus sheet. John writes as “the Elder” (1). Use of this word carries with it the authority and recognition that he is the sole remaining apostle of the original twelve. Like the rest of his writings, he wrote this towards the end of his life, from about 90 to 95 AD.
2. The theme of this epistle, unlike 2nd John, where he writes a warning against providing hospitality to false teachers, is that he writes here because Diotrephes was not receiving the true itinerant preachers who were speaking sound doctrine. He also expelled those who wished to provide hospitality to them from the church, speaking evil against them as well as against John himself (9-10).

## B. Synopses of the Text.

1. John writes to a man named Gaius, a common name at that time, and several individuals with this name are mentioned in the New Testament in conjunction with the Apostle Paul. It is unknown whether this Gaius is one of them. He is a dear friend of John and was loved “in truth” (1). John expresses his joy to know that Gaius and others of “his children” are walking in truth (3-4). Truth was an important issue at that time. Many false teachers were attempting to bring false doctrine into the church. John had written previously in 1st and 2nd John against such men and the false teaching they brought with them.
2. Gaius had provided hospitality to teachers of sound Christian doctrine, and Gaius had received witness of his love for them before the church (5-6). But John warns against Diotrephes, who, as noted in the summary above, was not receiving the brothers and speaking “against us with malicious words”. And not being content with that, he puts those who practiced hospitality out of the church (10).
3. He writes again, “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God” (11). He then mentions a Demetrius who “has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true” (12). Like John expressed in 2nd John, truth is a very important concept to him.

C. Discussion Questions, Application, and Passing it on.

1. Christian hospitality is an attribute which is praised in the New Testament (Romans 12:13). Are you one who practices hospitality to other Christians? Do you use discernment in hospitality as noted in 2nd John?
2. Diotrephes' desire "to have the preeminence among them" (9) is criticized by John. Do you desire to have a prideful desire to be preeminent? What can you do about it if you do?

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*This New Testament survey was provided by Joshua Nations ([JoshuaNations.org](http://JoshuaNations.org))*