

Study Notes For Third John

(Chapter One)

III John 1:1 *“The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.”*

- The word translated “elder” [πρεσβύτερος; Strong’s # 4245] can refer to someone older in age than another person (**Luke 15:25**, **Acts 2:17** [old men], and **I Timothy 5:1-2**), someone holding the office of an elder in the local church (**Acts 14:23**, **Acts 15:22**, **Titus 1:5-9**, and **I Peter 5:1**), angelic beings in visions of Heaven (**Revelation 4:4**), or authoritative elders in Israel (**Matthew 26:3** and **Acts 4:8**).
- Second John started the same way [The elder] (**II John 1:1**).
- The term translated “wellbeloved” [ἀγαπητός] is most often translated “beloved” (**Matthew 3:17**, **Matthew 12:18**, **Matthew 17:5**, **Mark 1:11**, **Mark 9:7**, **Luke 3:22**, etc.). The three other times this term is found in this letter it is translated “Beloved” (**III John 1:2**, **III John 1:5**, and **III John 1:11**). The term is also translated “dear” in various passages and serves as a good idea of what the term means (**I Thessalonians 2:8**).
- Gaius [seemingly common name or possibly same person in different accounts] (**Acts 19:29**, **Acts 20:2-4**, **Romans 16:23**, and **I Corinthians 1:14**).
- The penman of this letter expresses love “in the truth” as we read in **II John 1:1**.
- Remember, “in the truth” is a state of being (**III John 1:3**) like being “in the light” and in fellowship with the faithful (**I John 1:1-7**). Satan, as a contrast, did not abide in the truth (**John 8:44**).
- When you study through I John, II John, and III John, you cannot miss the message of brotherly love (**I John 2:7-10**, **I John 3:10-18**, **I John 3:23**, **I John 4:7-5:3**, and **II John 1:5**).

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

- What a great sentiment from brother to brother. The wisdom of the Spirit of God in revealing this is wonderful. He wants his brother to be doing well physically as he is spiritually (cf. **I Corinthians 10:24**). *We will talk about the spiritual in vs. 3!
- “Prosper” or “prospereth” means to succeed (i.e. **Romans 1:9-10**). Can apply to one having financial means (**I Corinthians 16:2**).
- Brethren want to see each other doing well even when that brother or sister may not be themselves (i.e. **II Corinthians 13:9**).
- We ought to feel both empathetically for our brothers and sisters in Christ (**Romans 12:15** and **I Corinthians 12:25-26**).

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.”*

- Gaius was well reported of (**Acts 10:22, Acts 16:1-2, Romans 1:8, I Thessalonians 3:5-9, I Timothy 3:7, and III John 1:12**).
- Reputation matters (**Proverbs 22:1 and Ecclesiastes 7:1**).
- Rejoicing to find he was walking in the truth. Hearing about the faithfulness of other brethren is awesome (**Ephesians 1:15-16, Colossians 1:3-4, I Thessalonians 2:9-10, Philemon 1:4-5, and II John 1:4**).
- The effect of a good report (**Proverbs 15:13, Proverbs 25:25, and II Corinthians 7:5-7**).
- Consider how teachers feel when those they have worked with are not doing well (**II Corinthians 12:20-21, Galatians 4:8-11, and Galatians 4:20**).
- Apostasy runs rampant (**II Peter 2:1-3**). So, hearing of those doing well is awesome.
- “Testified” is also translated “reported of” (**I Timothy 5:10**) or later in this letter as “borne witness” (**III John 1:6**), and “bear record” (**III John 1:12**) among other phrases.
- The truth “in thee” (**Psalms 51:6, John 15:7, and Colossians 3:16**).
- Walking in the truth is walking uprightly according to the truth (cf. **Galatians 2:14**). Like unto walking in the light (**I John 1:1-2:6**).
- Walking in the truth is commanded (**II John 1:4; cf. Malachi 2:6**).

III John 1:4 *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”*

- A teacher feeling as though he is a spiritual parent (**I Corinthians 4:14-17, II Corinthians 12:12-15, Galatians 4:19, Philippians 2:19-23, Philemon 1:10, I Thessalonians 2:7-8, I Timothy 1:2, I Timothy 1:18, II Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4, I John 2:1, and I John 3:18**).
- Following the point, how does a parent feel when his or her child does right (**Proverbs 15:20, Proverbs 23:15-16, and Proverbs 23:24-26**)? Or the opposite (**Proverbs 10:1 and Proverbs 19:26**).
- No greater joy (**Philippians 2:14-16, Philippians 4:1, and I Thessalonians 2:19-20**).
- Walking in the truth (see notes on vs. 3).

III John 1:5 *“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;”*

- In general, Christians are to do good and should be trusted to do so (**Luke 6:35, Romans 12:13-16, Galatians 6:7-10, I Thessalonians 5:15, I Timothy 5:10, I Timothy 6:17-18, and Hebrews 13:1-2; cf. Romans 16:23**).
- Specifically, in this context, we are reading about hospitality towards traveling saints whether they were known or not (**I Peter 4:8-11**). Later in the context we will see Diotrephes does not receive the brethren (vs. 9-10).
- Here is a question, are the “strangers” saints? The Greek word can mean: “...2) one who receives and entertains another hospitably; 2a) with whom he

- stays or lodges, a host” (Strong’s # 3581; Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon). We have seen from the Scriptures that the distinction doesn’t matter.
- The context has these brethren and strangers reporting the good Gaius has done to the church (vs. 6), so it does not make sense to conclude the strangers are non Christians. Strangers can just be saints you do not personally know (cf. **Matthew 25:35; 25:38; 25:43; 25:44**).
 - We also have to know that Gaius was not bringing in those that would have caused him to sin (**II John 1:7-11**). As saints traveled, they would sometimes have commendations from faithful saints (**Romans 16:1-2**). Thus, though they might be strangers to the local brethren, they were not entirely unknown in regard to their spiritual state.

III 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:”*

- Reports about brethren and their good works (**Ephesians 1:15, Colossians 1:4, and Philemon 1:5-7**) before the church (**Acts 14:36-28; 15:4**).
- We will later discuss, *“Demetrius hath good report of all”* (**III John 1:12**).
- Bringing forward brethren on their journey is doing well (**Acts 15:3, Acts 21:5, Romans 15:24, I Corinthians 16:6, I Corinthians 16:11, II Corinthians 11:15-16, and Titus 3:13**).

III John 1:7 *“Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.”*

- Those who were on journey’s, as mentioned in verse six, were traveling “for His name’s sake” (**II Corinthians 4:5**).
- Thinking about the phrase “for His name’s sake” (**Matthew 10:22, Matthew 19:27-29, Matthew 24:9, Mark 13:13, John 15:18-21, Acts 9:11-16, I John 2:12, and Revelation 2:3**).
- That the took nothing from “the Gentiles” is not to be understood as though Gentile Christians could not aid other saints that may be Jews (**Romans 15:25-27**).
- Thus, we’ have to infer that this in reference to Gentiles outside of the body which did not know God (**I Thessalonians 4:5, I Peter 2:12, and I Peter 4:1-5**). The Greek term “ἔθνος” (Strong’s # 1484) can just mean “nation” (**Matthew 21:43, Matthew 24:7, Luke 23:2, Acts 2:5, etc.**) or “heathen” (**II Corinthians 11:26**).

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

- Faithful brethren ought to be received by other saints (**Romans 15:5-7, Romans 16:1-2, I Corinthians 16:10-11, and Colossians 4:10**).
- The opposite is true if they are not faithful brethren (**II John 1:6-11**).
- Teachers of the Gospel needed to be received and there were consequences if such did not occur (**Matthew 10:7-14 and Matthew 10:40-42**).

- If you want to be a fellowhelper [cf. **II Corinthians 8:23**], receive those doing the work (**I Corinthians 16:10-11** and **I Corinthians 16:14-18**).

III John 1:9 *“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”*

- Obviously, local churches received letters from inspired men (**I Corinthians 1:2**, **II Corinthians 1:1**, **Colossians 4:16**, **I Thessalonians 1:1**, **II Thessalonians 1:1**, etc.).
- Think about refusing a letter that is inspired (**I Thessalonians 4:8**).
- Diotrephes was wrong to desire the preeminence [ambitious of distinction; desire to be first] (**Mark 10:35-45**).
- Think about what ties to one’s desire of preeminence (**Matthew 23:1-12**).
- Faithful saints elevate others above themselves (**Romans 12:9-10** and **Philippians 2:1-11**) because of a serve one another mentality (**Galatians 5:13**).
- Diotrephes was wrong for not receiving faithful saints (**John 13:20**). He is the opposite of Gaius.

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.”*

- “If I come, I will remember...” is a promising threat like unto Paul who said similarly to the Corinthians (**I Corinthians 4:16-21**, **II Corinthians 10:1-11**, and **II Corinthians 13:1-10**).
- Diotrephes was maliciously making false accusations against them (**Romans 3:8**).
- The faithful know to expect such out of the world (**Psalms 38:20**, **Luke 6:22-23**, **I Peter 3:16-17**, and **I John 3:13**). How about among brethren (**James 4:11**)?
- How could one be seen as a Christian when he spoke evil of brethren and on top of that; brethren in authority (**Ephesians 4:31** and **I Peter 3:8-12**)?
- As though talking was bad enough, he wasn’t content with stopping there. He forbid some and cast some out of the church. This was behavior we saw with Jews and the synagogue to control people (**John 9:22** and **John 12:42**).
- Think about what it means to forbid and cast out the faithful (**Isaiah 66:5**).

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.”*

- Don’t follow [mimic] evil (**Psalms 34:14**, **Psalms 37:27**, **Proverbs 1:8-19**, **Proverbs 13:20**, **Proverbs 16:17**, **II Corinthians 6:4-7:1**, **Ephesians 5:6-11**, **I Timothy 6:3-5**, etc.).
- Take the examples of the evil to learn what NOT to do (**Proverbs 21:12**, **Romans 15:4**, **I Corinthians 10:1-12**, and **Jude 1:7**).

- Follow the good (**I Corinthians 11:1, Philipians 3:17, Philipians 4:9, II Thessalonians 3:7-9, Hebrews 13:7, and I Peter 2:21-25**).
- He that doeth good is of God while those that do evil are of the devil (**I John 2:29-3:10**).
- Hath not seen God is not about physical sight (**Exodus 33:17-20, Deuteronomy 4:12, John 1:18, John 6:46, and I John 4:12**).
- The seeing of God here is that of faith (i.e. **Psalms 27:13-14**).

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.”*

- Reputation matters (**Proverbs 20:11, Proverbs 22:1, Ecclesiastes 7:1, Ecclesiastes 10:1, Matthew 7:15-20, and I Peter 2:12**).
- Of a good report (**Acts 10:22, Acts 22:12, and I Timothy 3:7**) requires others to see your conduct and talk about it (**Colossians 4:12-13 and I Timothy 5:10**; cf. **Proverbs 27:2**).
- The truth testifies of him too (**John 3:19-21**; cf. **Joshua 22:5 and II John 1:9**).
- Credibility matters (**John 5:32-33**). Those of the truth also testified of Demetrius being good (**Proverbs 14:5**).
- See earlier context: **III John 1:1-6**
- The saints know “our record is true” (**II Corinthians 13:8**).

III John 1:13-14 *“I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 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.”*

- There was more to say. Sometimes more teaching is required than one letter or setting can provide for various reasons (**Mark 4:33-34, John 16:12, and II John 1:12**).
- Some things are better to say in person (**Acts 15:36, Romans 1:13, Romans 15:30-32, I Corinthians 11:34, and II Timothy 1:4**).
- Salutations and greetings by name (**Romans 16:5-16**).