

3rd John

Recipient (v. 1)

VERSE 1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth (Ὁ πρεσβύτερος Γαίῳ

τῷ ἀγαπητῷ, ὃν ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ.

[*d.a.w/adj.nom.m.s. presbuteros + noun dat.m.s. Gaius + d.a.w/adj. dat.m.s. agapetos beloved + pro.dat.m.s. hos + pro.nom.m.s. ego + pres.act.ind.1s. agapao love + prep en + noun loc.f.s. aletheia truth*].

ANALYSIS: VERSE 1

1. The list of letters in the NT written to an individual include: Philemon, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, 2nd John and this short letter.
2. John identifies himself as “the Elder” a title which is low-key but nonetheless indicates a relationship of authority and identity (1 Tim. 5:19; 1 Pet. 5:1).
3. Gaius was a common name in the Roman Empire.
4. All we know about this believer is what is in this letter.
5. Interestingly, there is a Gaius who provided a place for believers to assembly mentioned in Rom. 16:23.
6. Gaius was as member of a local assembly within John’s apostolic jurisdiction.
7. John addresses him as his “beloved” or “dear” friend (vv. 1, 2, 5 & 11).
8. This term of affection indicates an established relationship.
9. Their relationship is tied to their mutual love of “truth.”
10. The phrase “whom I love in truth” is also used in 2nd John verse 1 for “the chosen lady and her children.”
11. Love of the truth is the basis for genuine Christian fellowship (Ps. 66:14; Acts 2:12; 2 Cor. 6:14; Phil. 2:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:3, 6, 7).
12. This letter of concern for Gaius’ well-being demonstrates John’s love for him.

A Prayer Wish (v. 2)

VERSE 2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health,

just as your soul prospers (Ἀγαπητέ, περὶ πάντων εὐχομαί σε εὐδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν,

καθὼς εὐδοοῦταί σου ἡ ψυχή [*adj.voc.m.s. agapetos + prep peri + adj.gen.nt.p. pas* “in all

respects” + *pres.dep.ind.1s. euchomai pray + pro.acc.s. su you + pres.pass.infin. euodoomai to*

succeed, do well, earn money, be possible; 4x at Rom. 1:10; 1 Cor. 16:2 + conj. kai +

pres.act.infin. hugianino be sound, be in good health; Lk. 5:31; 7:10; 15:27; 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2

Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2 + conj. kathos just as + pres.pass.ind.3s. euodoomai

prosper + pro.gen.s. su + noun nom.f.s. psuche soul]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 2

1. Verse 2 takes the place of a standard greeting.
2. John informs Gaius that his prayer and wish for his friend is that he might prosper physically.
3. His prayer-wish is that Gaius might overtly prosper in every way that is appropriated to his niche.
4. The verb “pray” is *euchomai*, and is used in the NT for a wish/desire (Acts 26:29; 27:29; Rom. 9:3) as well as an actual prayer (2 Cor. 13:7, 9; Jam. 5:16).
5. Again, here it is prayer specifically for Gaius’ overt prosperity as opposed to spiritual prosperity.
6. The verb “may prosper” (*euodoomai*) is used of material prosperity (1 Cor. 16:2) or success in some enterprise (Rom. 1:10).
7. John’s wish for him is that he prospers “in all respects” or “in all things.”
8. This covers a wide range of possibilities.
9. John singles out Gaius’ health.
10. The infinitive “may be in good health” is the verb *hugiano* (be sound, well-grounded; and be in good health).
11. It is used of good health in Lk. 5:31 and 7:10.
12. It is used of being sound in the faith in 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2.
13. Clearly, the usage here has to do with Gaius’ health.
14. So are we to conclude that Gaius’ was under a health test along with a need in the material realm?
15. If things were fine with him then John’s wish for him loses its impact.
16. John’s wish for his friend is that Gaius’ overt circumstances are significantly turned around to match his soulish prosperity.
17. In this regard, John repeats the same verb used in connection with Gaius’ physical health.

18. “Just as your soul prospers” indicates a high level of improvement in Gaius’ overt circumstances as he was a top-notch believer in terms of devotion to truth and its application as noted in the body of this letter.
19. The WOG promises a variety of temporal blessings that flow from faithfulness to the truth (ex. Prov. 3:2, 8-10, 16; 4:8, 9, 12; 8:19, 21; and so on throughout Proverbs).
20. It is good to have a spiritual mentor who recognizes those who are in line for temporal blessings based on love of truth.

The Basis for John’s Confidence (vv. 3-4)

VERSE 3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that

is, how you are walking in truth (ἐχάρην γὰρ λίαν ἐρχομένων ἀδελφῶν καὶ μαρτυρούντων σου τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, καθὼς σὺ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ περιπατεῖ [*aor.dep.ind.1s. chairo be glad, rejoice + conj gar + adv. lian greatly; “very” + pres.dep.part.gen.m.p. erchomai come + noun gen.m.p. adelphos + conj kai + pres.act.part.gen.m.p. martureo be witness, testify + pro.gen.m.s. su + d.a.w/noun dat.f.s. aletheia truth + conj kathos “how” + pro.nom.s. su you + prep en + noun loc.f.s. aletheia + pres.act.ind.2s. peripateo walk*]).

VERSE 4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the

truth (*adj.acc.f.s. meizon greater + pro.gen.nt.p. houtos “than this” + neg ouk no + pres.act.ind.1s. echo have + noun acc.f.s. chara joy + conj hina + pres.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.p. teknon child + adj.acc.nt.s. emos my + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. aletheia truth + pres.pass.part.nt.p. peripateo*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 3-4

1. John’s pray-wish was in part based on fresh news of Gaius’ fidelity to the truth.
2. This news came to John by some recent visitors.
3. “They testified to your truth” is a way of expressing Gaius’ steadfastness with all things pertaining to zeal and application.
4. The final clause “how you are walking in truth” places emphasis on application of BD.
5. “Truth” occurs 20x in John’s epistles.
6. “Walking in truth” occurs 3x: 2 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:3, 4; and “walk” occurs in 1 Jn. 1:6, 7; 2:6 & 2 Jn. 1:6.
7. John characterized this fresh information as something that brought him great joy.

8. “I have no greater joy” refers to John’s function as a communicator and spiritual leader on those occasions when he received positive reports with respect to the spiritual excellence of his “children.”
9. Nothing brought him the happiness than that of a good report that his “children were walking in the truth.”
10. Throughout 1st John he refers to his spiritual charges as his “little children” (1 Jn. 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).
11. Only John so designates believers under his spiritual care in the NT.
12. He no doubt picked up this designation from Jesus while the disciples were with Him (Jn. 13:33; 21:5).

Commendation (vv. 5-6)

VERSE 5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the

brethren, and especially when they are strangers (Ἀγαπητέ, πιστὸν ποιεῖς ὃ ἔαν ἐργάσῃ εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τοῦτο ξένους, [*pro.voc.m.s. agapetos + adj.acc.nt.s. pistos faithfully + pro.acc.nt.s. hos whatever + part. ean + aor.dep.subj.2s. ergazomai accomplish + prep eis for + d.a.w/noun acc.m.p. adelphos + conj. kai + pro.acc.nt.s houtos + adj.acc.m.s. zenos stranger*]);

VERSE 6 and they have testified to your love before the church (ὅτι ἐμαρτύρησάν σου

τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐνώπιον ἐκκλησίας, [*pro.nom.m.p. hos + aor.act.ind.3p. martureo testify + pro.gen.m.s. su + d.a.w/noun dat.f.s. agape love + prep enopion before + noun acc.f.s. ekklesia church*]).

You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God (*pro.acc.m.p.*

hos + adv. kalos well + fut.act.ind.2s. poieo do + aor.act.part.nom.m.s. propemto send/help on one’s way; Acts 15:3; 20:38; 21:5; Rom. 15:24; 1 Cor. 16:6, 11; 2 Cor. 1:16; Titus 3:13 + adv. azios in a manner worthy of + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s theos]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 5-6

1. In these two verses John cites an outstanding example of Gaius' "walking in the truth."
2. What John's visitors relayed to him was Gaius' exceptional level of application toward needy believers in the area (v. 5a), as well as travelers here designated as "strangers."
3. At this juncture of the CA there were Christians passing through the area where Gaius lived.
4. Gaius stood out as one who displayed hospitality to such sojourners.
5. Such travelers included individuals that were serving the kingdom of God (evangelists, etc.) as noted in v. 7.
6. Individuals who were the beneficiaries of Gaius' style of hospitality were so impressed that they felt compelled to extol his "love" before the local assembly Gaius was a member of (v. 6a).
7. A noteworthy aspect of Gaius' generosity is seen in the fact that he even showed hospitality to "strangers" (v. 5b).
8. Strangers had an especially difficult time finding decent accommodations except with friends.
9. "Strangers" refers to those individuals that Gaius was unacquainted with but who were believers (cf. Matt. 25:35, 38, 43, 44
10. In v. 6b John encourages Gaius to continue in this effort on behalf of "strangers."
11. On top of providing travelers with accommodations (all that implies), Gaius "sent them on their way in a manner worthy of God."
12. "Sent them on their way" implies material support beyond accommodations.
13. "Worthy of God" only occurs here and indicates that which is befitting of God's treatment of the needy.
14. "You do well" is John's personal stamp of approval.
15. Gaius probably had nay-Sayers to deal with and so he is encouraged to keep making this type of application.
16. In conclusion: he went above and beyond in applying hospitality even to strangers.
17. Cf. Rom. 12:13 and Heb. 13:2 in this regard.

Support of Missionaries (vv. 7-8)

VERSE 7 For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the

Gentiles (ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐξῆλθον μηδὲν λαμβάνοντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνικῶν. [*prep huper on behalf of + conj. gar + d.a.w/noun gen.nt.s. onoma Name + aor.act.ind.3p. exerchomai go out + adj.acc.nt.s. medeis nothing + pres.pass.part.nom.m.p lambano receive; “accepting” + prep apo + d.a.w/noun abl.m.p. ethnikos Gentile*]).

VERSE 8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow

workers with the truth (ἡμεῖς οὖν ὀφείλομεν ὑπολαμβάνειν τοὺς τοιούτους, ἵνα συνεργοὶ γινώμεθα τῇ ἀληθείᾳ [*pro.nom.pl. ego + conj oun therefore + pres.act.subj.1p. opheilo ought + pres.act.infin. hupolambano help, support + d.a.w/pro.acc.m.p. toioutos such ones + conj hina that + adj.nom.m.p. sunergos fellow-worker + pres.dep.subj.1p. ginomai “we may” + noun loc.f.s. aletheia truth*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 7-8

1. “For they went out” refers to “strangers” who came to the place where Gaius lived.
2. John’s commendation to Gaius is tied to the fact that these “strangers” were traveling missionaries.
3. Hence, the phrase “they went out for the sake of the Name.”
4. “The Name” can only refer to the name par excellent, the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Jn. 5:13).
5. So this especially significant category of Gaius’ generosity was legitimate servants sent out to evangelize the Gentiles.
6. That they were beyond reproach is noted by the phrase “accepting nothing from the Gentiles” (v. 7b).
7. The Gentiles here refers to those who are unsaved.
8. It is a black mark on Christianity when Christians take or solicit money from those who are in this category.
9. It is totally inappropriate to ask or expect material support from those who are in need to evangelization (Ph 1 or Ph 2).
10. Paul even refused to aid from new converts, but rather supported himself when he initially came to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2:7, 8).
11. Established believers are to support those who teach and lead them spiritually (1 Cor. 9:7-14).
12. Violation of this principle is to fall into the same category as those who charged for their services (as then so today there are many who violate this principle).

13. John concludes this section dealing with Gaius' support of Christian travelers with a statement of obligation believers have toward those who fall into this category (v. 8).
14. When believers support materially/monetarily those who are communicators of truth, they "become fellow workers with the truth."
15. Gaius was a model example of this type of application.
16. When we aid those who are engage in bringing truth to others we share in the blessings of those who do the work of evangelization.
17. The potential is brought out by the subjunctive mood of the verb "we may become."
18. Temporal and eternal blessing is ours when we take the opportunity to assist others (note Matt. 10:41).