

The Third Letter of John

*. **Who wrote the letter?**

The letter itself has no stated author (no name is given in the text). In the opening of the letter, the writer is referred to as “the elder” implying one who is a respected man of authority among the Christians of that area. Even though the writer is unknown, tradition strongly indicates that John the Apostle is the author. This is supported by the fact that the author appears to be an eyewitness and a person of authority among the early church.

*. **When was it written?**

The letter appears to be written during the late 80’s or early 90’s. The church is preparing to experience a tremendous persecution. In addition, heresy is a constant threat. The church is in a crisis – and another crisis for this church is on the horizon of which they do not know: soon John the Apostle, their leader, will be exiled to the Isle of Patmos from which he will write the Revelation.

*. **To whom was it written?**

The recipient of this letter is a man named Gaius. Most believe that he was the pastor/leader of a local church near Ephesus. He is also referred to as one of the children of John implying that John was instrumental being used by God when Gaius began to walk with Christ.

*. **Why was it written?**

False teachers had infiltrated the churches in the area around Ephesus. John is writing to encourage the pastor and to prepare the pastor for John’s soon anticipated visit. In addition, John uses this letter to warn against one of the members who is concerned mainly with his own agenda.

*. **What is the main topic?**

God desires for his leaders to be faithful to the task given to them and He desires to use others to encourage the leaders.

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1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. **2** Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. **3** For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. **4** I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. **5** Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; **6** and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. **7** For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. **8** Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. **9** I wrote something to the church; but Diotrophes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. **10** For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church. **11** Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. **12** Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. **13** I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write them to you with pen and ink; **14** but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face. **15** Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.