

3 John

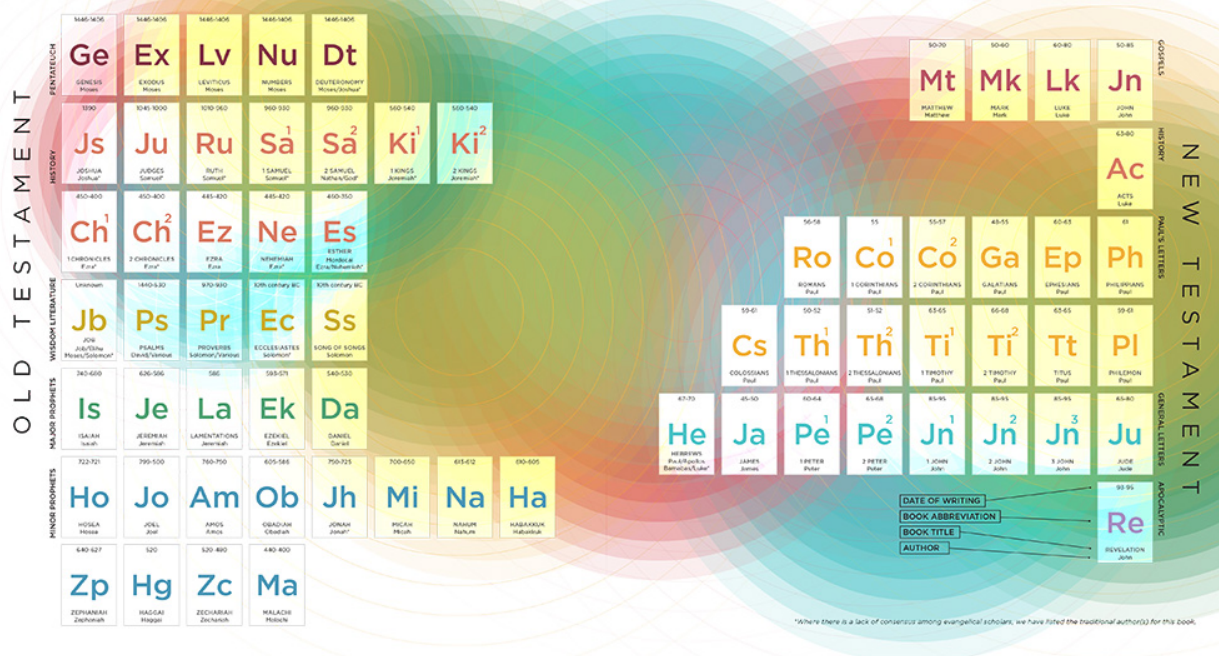
Introduction of 3 John & Greeting to Gaius (3 John 1:1-4)

Part 1: Introduction of 3 John

Where is 3 John in the Bible? (source: Challies.com)



THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE



What is 3 John about? (let's read it to find out)

Greeting to Gaius

1 The Elder,

To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:

2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. 3 For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Gaius Commended for Generosity

5 Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, 6 who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do*

well, **7** because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. **8** We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.

Diotrephes and Demetrius

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. **10** Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.

11 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.

12 Demetrius has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.

Farewell Greeting

13 I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; **14** but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face.

Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

Who wrote 3 John?

John (we're pretty sure it's the same John who wrote the **Gospel of John**, **1 John**, and **2 John**—because of the similarities between the letters). Read them to see it.

What is 3 John about?

3 John is about three **people**: John, Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius. And it's about the way we treat people around us—with love, with rebuke, and with commendation. But most of all, it's about our connection with people: **in the truth**.

Relationship that enables this kind of candid conversation doesn't come from casual touchpoints; it doesn't come from a once-a-week setting next to someone in church; it comes from deeply-held connections **in** and **from the truth** of Scripture.

In fact, the story of **3 John** can be told by the usage of the word **truth** in **3 John**. Consider this: John loved Gaius **in truth** (**1**). We can only love in truth if someone has come before of us and **testified of the truth** (**3**). Once we hear the testimony and are converted, then we repeatedly **walk in the truth** (**3, 4**). As we band together to follow Christ, we become **fellow workers for the truth** (**8**). And finally, if God permits, we will be known for a good testimony **from the truth** (**12**). The Christian life revolves around **truth**.

Who and where was Gaius?

We don't know. But Gaius was one of the most common names in the Roman Empire, so let's limit our attempts to pin our Gaius to another Gaius in Scripture. Also, you can pronounce his name GAY-us or GUY-us—either way is fine.

When was 3 John written?

Around 90 AD (close to the time that **1 John**, **2 John**, and **Revelation** were written—and there's agreement that it was among the last of the New Testament canon).

What is our schedule?



Date	Lesson
05/20/2018	3 John 1:1-4 : Greeting to Gaius
05/27/2018	3 John 1:5-8 : Gaius Commended for Generosity
06/03/2018	3 John 1:9-12 : Diotrephes and Demetrius
06/10/2018	3 John 1:13-14 : Farewell Greeting

Part 2: Greeting to Gaius (3 John 1:1-4)

Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Read: Greeting to Gaius (1:1-4)

1 The Elder,

To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:

2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. 3 For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Explain: Greeting to Gaius (1:1-4)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some.

Are there any literary/structural observations?

3 John is a letter and mostly follows a relatively standard letter format for the New Testament: greeting, commendations/warnings/challenges, and benediction.

Functionally speaking, **3 John** is about people. As seen in **John Stott's outline**, John writes to three different people: Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius:

I. The Message to Gaius (1-8)

II. The Message Concerning Diotrephes (9-10)

III. The Message Concerning Demetrius (11-12)

IV. The Conclusion and Greeting (13-14)¹

In our study, we'll look at how John addresses each, and how he asks Gaius to address each.

Are there any repeated words?

You/your (14), do/does (10), I (10), beloved/**love**/loves (7), not (6), **truth** (6), us/we (6), brethren (3), church (3), God (3), good (3), receive (3), testified/testimony (3), write/wrote (3), all (2), evil (2), face (2), friends (2), greet (2), just (2), name/name's (2), prosper/prosper (2), see/seen (2), therefore (2), walk (2), wish (2)

What do the words mean?

Most of the commentaries I've read about **3 John** talk about the accessibility of John's Greek (John was a simple guy), so if you've ever wanted to dig in and learn Greek, this is the letter to try it out on. (From a layperson's perspective, it's certainly easier to understand than Paul's **Romans**.)

Let's look at each word to see what the words mean.

Greeting to Gaius

1 The Elder [*presbyteros*; elder(-est), **old**],

To the beloved [*agapetos*; (dearly, well) beloved, dear; used in **1:1, 2, 5, 11**] **Gaius** [GUY-os; lord], **whom I love** [*agapao*; present active indicative; (be-)love(-ed)] **in truth** [*aletheia* (uh-LAY-thay-uh); true, truth, verity; used in **1:1, 3, 4, 8, 12**]:

2 Beloved [*agapetos*], **I pray** [present middle or passive deponent indicative; to wish; by implication, to pray to God: pray, will, wish] **that you** [singular] **may prosper** [present passive infinitive; to help on the road, i.e., (passively) succeed in reaching; figuratively, to succeed in business affairs: (have a) prosper(-ous journey); used twice in **1:2**] **in all things and be in health** [*hygiaino*; who-ghee-EYE-no; present active infinitive; to have sound health, i.e., be well (in body); figuratively, to be uncorrupt (true in doctrine):be in health, (be safe and) sound, (be) whole(-

¹ *The Letters of John*, John R. W. Stott (1988), page 221

some)], **just as your soul** [*psyche*; sue-HEY (guttural Hebrew 'h'); breath, i.e., (by implication) spirit, abstractly or concretely (the animal sentient principle only; heart (-ily), life, mind, soul, us, you) **prospers** [present passive or middle indicative]. [Stott: There is biblical warrant here for desiring the physical as well as the spiritual welfare of our Christian friends.² Guzik: What would we be like if our **physical** health was in the same state as our souls?³ Doddridge: What a curse this would bring upon many to wish that they might prosper even as their souls prospered!⁴] **3 For I rejoiced** [*chairo*; second aorist passive deponent indicative; to be "cheer"ful, i.e., calmly **happy** or well-off; impersonally, especially as salutation (on meeting or parting), be well: farewell, be glad, God speed, greeting, hail, joy(- fully), rejoice] **greatly** [exceeding, great(-ly), sore, very (chiefest)] **when brethren** [*adelphos*; from G1 (as a connective particle) and *delphys* (the womb); a brother (literally or figuratively) near or remote (much like G1): brother; used in **1:3, 5, 10**] **came** [present middle or passive deponent participle (i.e., **repeatedly** came); to come or go (in a great variety of applications, literally and figuratively): accompany, appear, bring, come, enter, fall out, go, grow, pass, resort, be set; used in **1:3, 10**] **and testified** [*martyreo*; present active participle (i.e., **repeatedly** testified); to be a witness, i.e., testify (literally or figuratively): charge, give (evidence), bear record, have (obtain, of) good (honest) report, be well reported of, testify, give (have) testimony, (be, bear, give, obtain) witness; used in **1:3, 6**, twice in **12**] **of the truth** [*aletheia* (uh-LAY-thay-uh); true, truth, verity; used in **1:1**, twice in **3, 4, 8, 12**] **that is in you, just as you walk** [*peripateo*; present active indicative; to tread all around, i.e., walk at large (especially as proof of ability); figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow (as a companion or votary): go, be occupied with, walk (about); used in **1:3, 4**] **in the truth** [*aletheia* (uh-LAY-thay-uh); true, truth, verity; used in **1:1**, twice in **3, 4, 8, 12**]. [Henry: The best evidence of our having the truth is our walking in the truth.⁵] **4 I have** [*echo*; present active indicative; to hold (used in very various applications, literally or figuratively, direct or remote; such as possession; ability, continuity, relation, or condition): be (able, possessed with), accompany, begin to amend, can(-not), count, diseased, do eat, enjoy, fear, following, have, hold, keep, lack, go to law, lie, must needs, of necessity, need, next, recover, reign, rest, return, take for, tremble, uncircumcised, use; used in **1:4, 13**] **no greater** [still larger (figuratively): greater] [*touton*; not translated here in the NKJV; of (from or concerning) these (persons or things): such, their, these (things),

² *The Letters of John*, John R. W. Stott (1988), page 227

³ *The Enduring Word Bible Commentary*, David Guzik (2013)

⁴ *The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, Volume 10*, Phillip Doddridge (1805), page 397

⁵ *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Matthew Henry (1998), page 2,458

they, this sort, those] **joy** [cheerfulness, i.e., calm **delight**: gladness, joy(-ful, -fully, -fulness, -ous)] **than to hear** [*akouo*; present active indicative or subjunctive; to hear (in various senses): give (in the) audience (of), come (to the ears), (shall) hear(-er, -ken), be noised, be reported, understand] **that my children** [a child (as produced): child, daughter, son; **Marshall: "Children" is a word used especially by Paul to refer to his own converts (1 Corinthians 4:14; Galatians 4:19; Philippians 2:22); in the same way the implication here may be that the elder had led Gaius to faith in Jesus Christ, but he may simply be using this phrase to refer to people under his pastoral care, to whom he adopted a fatherly attitude.**⁶] **walk** [*peripateo*; present active participle (i.e., **repeatedly** walk); to tread all around, i.e., walk at large (especially as proof of ability); figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow (as a companion or votary): go, be occupied with, walk (about); used in **1:3, 4**] **in truth** [*aletheia* (uh-LAY-thay-uh); true, truth, verity; used in **1:1**, twice in **3, 4, 8, 12**]. [**Stott: Whoever 'walks in the truth' is an integrated believer in whom there is no dichotomy between profession and practice. On the contrary, there is in him an exact correspondence between creed and conduct.**⁷]

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Christians should love one another
2. Christians should pray for one another (for a healthy body and soul)
3. Christians should rejoice over one another

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. Love other believers
2. Pray for other believers
3. Rejoice over other believers

Next week: Gaius Commended for Generosity (1:5-8)

5 Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, 6 who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, 7 because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.

⁶ *The Epistles of John*, I. Howard Marshall (1978), page 84

⁷ *The Letters of John*, John R. W. Stott (1988), page 288

Homework

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for help
2. Read next week's text (multiple times in multiple ways) (**3 John 1:5-8**)
3. Talk to someone about the text ([fb.com/OurSundaySchool](https://www.facebook.com/OurSundaySchool) or in person)
4. Share ([fb.com/OurSundaySchool](https://www.facebook.com/OurSundaySchool)) insights and questions by Thursday
5. Invite a member or non-member

Extra Credit

Watch: The Bible Project Video on **3 John** ([youtube.com/watch?v=l3QkE6nKylM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3QkE6nKylM))

Resources

The Letters of John, John R. W. Stott (1988)

The Enduring Word Bible Commentary, David Guzik (2013)

The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, Volume 10, Phillip Doddridge (1805)

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Matthew Henry (1998)

The Epistles of John, I. Howard Marshall (1978)

Quotes & Observations

Darla Skinner: Anyone reading **3 John**? Truth is mentioned repeatedly. Gaius and Demetrius loved the brethren. Diotrephes not so much. This book has striking similarities to **2 John**. I only know because they are on the same page in my Bible, so I just read them both. In fact, they both have an almost identical verse or two.