



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Third Catholic Epistle of St. John

Chapter 1

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

THE AUTHOR

- The Elder is St. John
- The internal evidence is:
 - ❖ The three epistles of St. John utilize much the same language and ideas
 - ❖ All bear similarity to concepts and language to the Gospel of St. John
 - ❖ The term "elder" would be a fitting description of St. John as the author, writing in his old age



Introduction

- The external evidence: Dionysius of Alexandria, third century, affirms that St. John is the author

RECIPIENT

- Gaius appears five times in the New Testament (Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14; 3 Jn 1:1)
- Whether he is one of those mentioned by St. Luke or St. Paul cannot be determined
- He was evidently a dear friend of St. John known for his hospitality



Introduction

PLACE AND DATE

- Ephesus is the place of writing as St. John lived there in the later years of his life
- Some placed the date before the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), most however place it around 90-95 A.D.

PURPOSE AND THEME

- The purpose of the epistle is threefold, related to the three men mentioned by name



Introduction

- To confirm that Gaius did right in supporting those teachers who came his way, encouraging him to continue this hospitality – 3 Jn 1:5-8
- To express his disapproval of Diotrephes for rejecting St. John and others whom he should have received – 3 Jn 1:9-10
- To encourage Gaius to imitate what is good, commending Demetrius as a good example – 3 Jn 1:11-12



Introduction

THE THEME

- Do not imitate what is evil, but what is good v. 11

OUTLINE

- Greetings, with an expression of great joy (1-4)
- The confirmation of Gaius (5-8)
- The disapproval of Diotrephes (9-10)
- The commendation of Demetrius (11-12)
- Concluding remarks (13-14)



Greeting to Gaius (1:1-4)

- The hospitality of the Corinthian Gaius named in Romans agrees well with what St. John says of him whom he addresses
- I: for emphasis, I personally
- Love in the truth: "Beloved" is repeated often, indicating strong affection (3 Jn 1:1,2,5,11)
- I know you are prospering in your soul. I wish you similar prosperity in your body and in all things



Greeting to Gaius (1:1-4)

- Certain brethren had been where Gaius lived, had enjoyed his hospitality and had spoken well of him to St. John on their return
- Truth in you: faith, walk in the truth: deeds
- Having the sound faith and good works, bring joy to the heart of our spiritual fathers
- To know that his children are walking in the truth gave St. John the greatest joy
- My children: reflects paternal love

Gaius Commended for Generosity (1:5-8)



- You do: In his kindness to brethren and strangers
- In those early ages hospitality to the believers sent on evangelistic missions, and especially to persecuted believers driven from home, was a very important duty
- These traveling brethren reported to the Church how Gaius had aided them
- A polite exhortation to continue such hospitality in the future

Gaius Commended for Generosity (1:5-8)



- The hospitality was not only to be shown by opening the home to these believers, but by helping them on their journey
- He who honors God's missionary servants (3 Jn 1:7), honors God
- Servants serve God only for His name's sake
- They could not ask aid of the Gentiles “the converts just made from the heathen” to whom they had gone forth

Gaius Commended for Generosity (1:5-8)



- It would have been unwise to have taken aid from the infant churches among the heathen
- the Greek word implies, not that they got nothing, though they had desired it, but that it was of their own choice they took nothing
- We (the established believers)
- As they "take" nothing from the Gentiles, we ought to take them up so as to support them
- Fellow workers with them to promote the truth

Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12)



- I wrote probably on the subject of receiving the brethren with brotherly love (3 Jn 1:8,10)
- Preeminence: through occupying a high place in the Church where Gaius was (3 Jn 1:10)
- Among them: over the members of the Church
- Does not receive us: by not receiving with love the brethren whom we recommended to be received
- It may be necessary for him to come. If he does, he will charge Diotrephes for his deeds

Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12)



- Tattling against us with malicious words to excuse and justify himself
- It was not enough for him that he did not receive the brethren but also, he prevented the church members from extending hospitality to them
- Putting them out by excommunication from the Church, which his influence, as a leading man
- Do not follow that which is evil as manifested in Diotrephes but good as manifested in Demetrius

Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12)



- Is of God: is born of God, who is good
- Has not seen (known) God: does not have the purity of the heart to see God spiritually
- All: who have had opportunity of knowing him
- Truth: The Gospel standard of truth bears witness to him that he walks in acts of real love, hospitality to the brethren
- We also: besides the testimony of all and the truth
- As ministers of Christ, we say also the truth



Farewell Greeting (1:13-14)

- Many things: With regard to churches, and particular persons, and concerning hospitality to the poor brethren
- Not with ink and pen: suggesting he prefers personal communication
- Peace: the most needed gift in a troubled world
- Our friends: not commonly used in NT, here in a friendly letter, is appropriately used
- By name: as if I had named them one by one



Conclusion

- For what does St. John pray in behalf of Gaius?
- What gave St. John his greatest joy?
- For what does John praise Gaius?
- What benefit do we receive when we support those who serve the Lord?
- Of what was Diotrophes guilty?
- What exhortation does St. John give to Gaius?
- Who does he commend?