

3 John

- 1. Who was the recipient? Is he mentioned elsewhere?** The recipient of this letter is a man named Gaius. Gaius was a common Roman name, so there is no guarantee that this is the same Gaius who is mentioned other places in the New Testament. There is a man named Gaius who is initially spoken of in Acts 19:29 and then again in Acts 20:4. This may or may not be the same guy that Paul immersed in Corinth -- see 1 Corinthians 1:14, who later granted hospitality to Paul when he wrote the letter of Romans -- see Romans 16:23. One thing is sure -- the Gaius of 3 John was a man whom John had greatly influenced for the Lord. John had a great love for him (verse 1), and was overjoyed to hear of his walk in the truth.
- 2. What does John mean by “truth” in verse 3?** The "truth" first and foremost in the Scriptures points to the truth which is embodied by Jesus Christ (John 1:14, Ephesians 4:21) and found in the Scriptures (Galatians 2:5, Ephesians 1:13, Colossians 1:5, 2 Timothy 2:15, James 1:18). Clearly Gaius was standing firm on the absolute authority of the Scriptures. Secondly, he was practicing what he preached. It is one thing to recognize, admit, and stand for the truth; it takes another level to actually demonstrate that in our daily walk. This is what the Lord really desires from us -- 1 John 1:6, 3:18.
- 3. How could someone rationally reject an apostle (verse 9)?** It doesn't seem like anyone could "rationally" reject an apostle. The Scripture is clear that the apostles had authority in the first-century church -- see the entire book of Acts of the Apostles (especially Acts 15:6, Acts 16:4), 2 Corinthians 10:8, 1 Thessalonians 2:6. However, just like the rebellion of Korah in the Old Testament, there are always those who resist authority -- see 2 Peter 2:10, Jude 1:8. One of the major problems facing the Lord's church is people who just want to "do their own thing." When a person has this mentality, he doesn't care about being "rational." At this point, one excuse is as good as another. The Scripture warns us to keep an eye on such people -- Romans 16:17-18.
- 4. What was the major point of the letter for the original audience?** The major point of the letter seems to be to encourage the Christians who were closely associated with Gaius to keep supporting other true Christians -- see verses 5-8. Though there was pressure from Diotrephes to avoid these other brethren, John makes the point that financial support of men who are spreading the true gospel makes us fellow workers with the truth. Jesus made the same point in Matthew 10:40-42.
- 5. What are some apparent differences between Diotrephes and Demetrius?** Diotrephes was a selfish person, desiring prestige among the brethren. Because of this, he did a number of ungodly things including: 1) resisting church authority, 2) unjustly accusing true brethren, 3) disallowing the support of saints from other parts of the world, and 4) excommunicating those who didn't abide by "his rules." On the other hand, Demetrius seemed to be a servant of God and of others. Demetrius had: 1) a good reputation among the brethren in general, 2) a good reputation from God for standing for the truth, and 3) a good reputation from church leadership who were willing to be character witnesses for him.

6. What can the modern Christian learn from this letter? 1) We should love the brethren in truth -- vs 1. Love means nothing if it is not verbally communicated and expressed in deeds -- see Proverbs 27:5, 1 John 3:18. 2) We can learn to pray for both the physical and spiritual needs of the saints -- vs 2. Our prayers do make a difference, so let's show our love through our prayers -- see Colossians 4:12, 1 Timothy 5:5. 3) We find that our faithful walk brings great joy to those that have spiritually led us -- vs 4 -- see also 2 John 1:4, Philemon 1:7, 20. 4) Teamwork is essential in the body of Christ -- vs 5-8. Assists are just as important as scores -- we are faithful when we bring what we have to the table -- see Romans 12:6-8, 1 Peter 4:10-11. 5) We shouldn't accept money from the Gentiles to support the spiritual revolution -- vs 7 -- we need to have faith in God and then put our money where our mouth is -- vs 8. 6) We need to humble ourselves and listen to church leadership -- vs 9-10 -- see also Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13. 7) We should imitate good, not evil. If you want to win, follow those who are winners. Everyone of us has a choice of who we will follow -- let's be good disciples of Christ by imitating those who follow him -- 1 Corinthians 11:1. 8) Let's build a good reputation based upon what we do -- Proverbs 20:11. 9) Communication with the saints is essential; face to face is the best! -- vs 13-14.

7. What other points of interest were noticed by the saints in Billings?