

One Chapter Books of the Bible (4)

3 JOHN

Introduction

- 1) Five books of the Bible have only one chapter – *Obadiah, Philemon, 2 & 3 John, Jude*
 - a) Due to their brevity, they get overlooked – seldom read and studied
- 2) **3 John** is one of four New Testament books with only one chapter (14 verses)
- 3) The epistle of 3 John is the subject of our study – commends one brother and denounces another

I) **Background**

- A) Author is **John**, the apostle
 - 1) Very similar in form to 2 John – personal letter
 - 2) Refers to himself as “the elder” (v. 1; cp. 2 John)
- B) *Date of writing*: AD 85-95
- C) Written to Gaius (v. 1); member of a local church, along with Diotrephes (leaders?)
 - 1) One of John’s “children” (v. 4; 1 Jn. 2:1; converted by John?)

II) **The Contrast between Gaius and Diotrephes (vv. 3-10)**

A) **Gaius**

- 1) Walks in the truth, God’s word (vv. 3-4)
 - a) It is vital to teach and apply God’s word (2 Tim. 4:1-3; Titus 1:9)
- 2) Fellow-workers with other faithful brethren (vv. 5-6, 8)
 - a) Church is to be a functioning body (local) and fellowship (universal) in the Lord’s work
 - b) Unity of labor is possible when we walk together in truth and love
- 3) Received/supported those who traveled in the work of the Lord (vv. 5-7)
 - a) Interested in the Lord’s work in other places; good attitude toward other brethren

B) **Diotrephes**

- 1) Not receive what John (and other apostles) wrote (v. 9)
 - a) Not direct others to hear and apply the apostolic doctrine of Christ; refuse instruction
- 2) Loved to have the preeminence among brethren (v. 9)
 - a) Bad-mouthed and marginalized those who would oppose him (v. 10)
 - b) More concerned about his own agenda and position than in the will of God
- 3) Did not receive brethren – put them out of the church (v. 10)
 - a) All attention for him; discourage attention to others; bad attitude toward other brethren

III) **The Prospering Soul (v. 2)**

- A) Paul prays for Gaius’ health and prosperity, that they be just as his soul prospers
 - 1) Good prosperity and physical health is nice, but spiritual prosperity is the most important
 - 2) “Health and Wealth Gospel” should be about spiritual health and spiritual wealth (because physical health and material wealth is fleeting and not guaranteed)
- B) Gaius’ spiritual life was healthy and growing – why did his soul enjoy prosperity?
 - 1) *Walking in truth* (vv. 3-4) – loving and trusting God’s word; let it nourish and guide you
 - 2) *Serving others* (vv. 5-6a) – seeking opportunities to help, encourage, teach, give to others
 - 3) *Imitating good people* (vv. 11-12 Demetrius) – copying their way of life (Phil. 3:17)
- C) Demetrius had a good testimony (v. 12)
 - 1) Verified by all who knew him
 - 2) Verified by the truth – known by his teaching and deeds (cf. 2 Jn. 9-11)
 - 3) Verified by the apostles themselves

Conclusion

John desires to see and be with them soon; wishes them peace and sends greetings to friends (vv. 13-14); consider how wonderful it is to know and love those who are one with you in Christ!