



Tweets from Heaven

#7 III John: Part 1

I. Introduction

One of the strongest “proofs” that support the inerrancy of the scriptures is the fact that the books of the Bible describe “the good, the bad and the ugly” of God’s kids (not just the “perfection” of the saints). III John certainly has a little of the “good, the bad, and the ugly.”

- A. III John is a companion “postcard” from John (the Elder) to another individual (Gaius).
- B. Comparison of the two books.

2 John	3 John
Written to a lady and her children	Written to a man and his acquaintances
<i>Problem:</i> a lady is receiving the wrong kind of travelers	<i>Problem:</i> a man is rejecting the right kind of travelers
A matter of misplaced hospitality	A matter of missing hospitality
<i>Needed:</i> truth to balance love	<i>Needed:</i> love to balance truth

(Chart from Chuck Swindoll’s book, *New Testament Postcards*, p.18)

- C. Purpose of the letter:

To encourage those first century “baby churches” to properly respect, support and show hospitality to the traveling teachers. Pastors who remained in one area were easily honored, but those who were itinerate evangelists also required support. (see 1 Cor. 9:1-14)

II. Gaius

- A. There are three New Testament men named Gaius.
 1. The Macedonian who was with Paul during the riot of Ephesus (Acts 19:29).
 2. Man from Derbe who carried the collection to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4).
 3. Gaius from Corinth who was baptized by Paul (1 Cor. 1:14).

But this Gaius is not likely to be any of these men. Gaius was a very common name in the Roman Empire.

- B. John calls him "beloved" ("dear friend") four times (vs. 1, 2, 5, 11) – he has a close, personal relationship with Gaius.
- C. John is concerned about his health – he wants to encourage him.
 - 1. Paul may have heard that his friend is in poor health.
 - 2. Paul is connecting Gaius' physical health with his spiritual health (Consider John 5:14 and Ps. 119:71)
- D. John sees his friend through the lens of truth – he is delighted with his spiritual progress...as evidenced by the way Gaius is receiving these traveling preachers (vs. 4-6)

A word about hospitality...

- 1. In Old Testament context:

There was the "alien" (the "ger") who lacked immediate food and lodging (Gen. 18:2-8); and community widows, orphans and the poor (Ruth 2:2-17)

- 2. In a New Testament context:

The communal meal had great symbolic significance – sharing food was to share life (Luke 11:37, 15:1, 19:5-6)

1 Peter 4:8 "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins."

Rom. 12:13 "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality."

- 3. Special Note: You may entertain an angel!

Heb 13:1-3 "Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body."

- E. John's argument for supporting these traveling teachers
 - 1. Because they minister for the sake of Christ – not themselves – "in a manner worthy of God." (vs. 6)
 - 2. Because they work without a focus on compensation (vs. 7).
 - 3. Because they are "fellow workers in the truth" (vs. 8).

III. Diotrephes

"Viciously guarding his turf, Diotrephes shook off John teaching in a previous letter (II John) and assaulted the apostle with sharp-edged accusations. " (Swindoll)

The core problem: Diotrephes "loves to be first" (vs. 9)

IV. So What? Consider the Pharisees in Matthew 23

- A. They don't do what they say (vs 3)
- B. They burden others with their advice (vs. 4)
- C. They are all about externals (vs. 5)
- D. They seek public praise (vs. 6)
- E. They love accolades (vs 7-10)

Bottom line: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

Discussion Questions

1. How do you and your family show respect and give honor to those who spiritually minister to you? Could that be improved?
2. In general, are you hospitable? Why? Why not?
3. How are you "scoring" on the servant meter?