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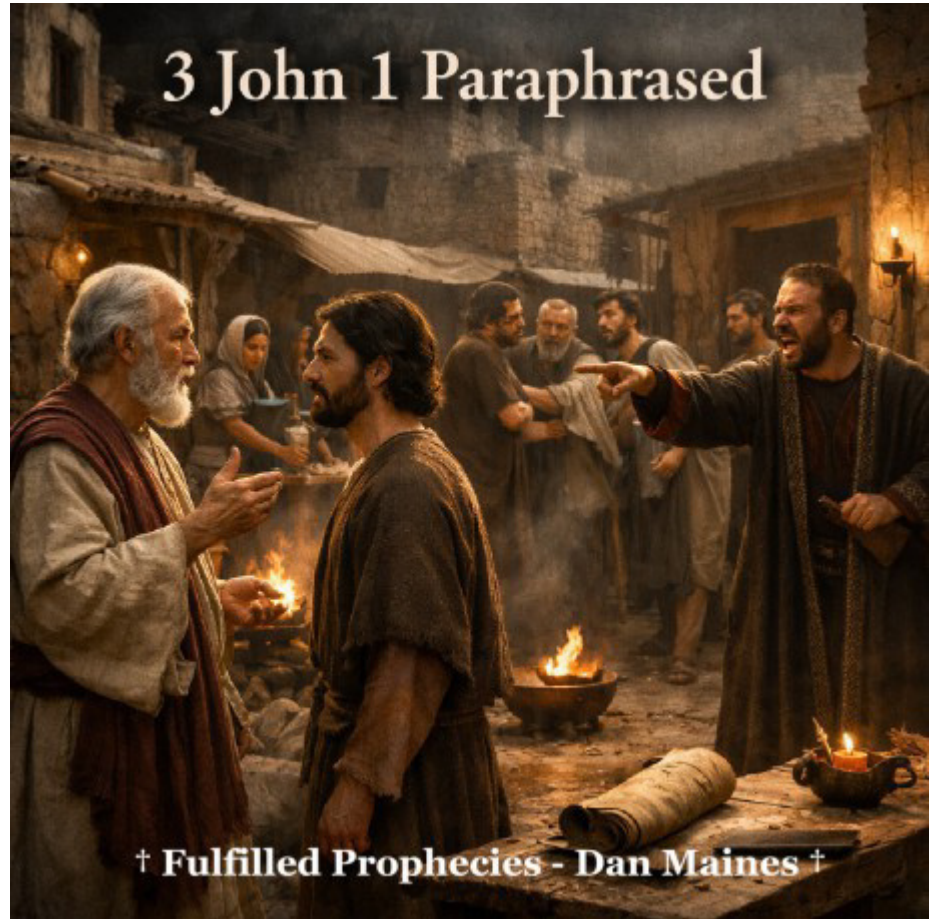
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3 John 1 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

3 John 1 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This short letter from John gives us a clear look at how believers were supporting one another while the gospel was spreading in the first century. The church wasn't just about belief, it was about walking in truth and helping those who carried the message of Christ to others.

† John writes to Gaius, a faithful believer who was known for supporting traveling teachers and missionaries. In contrast to him, another man named Diotrephes was creating division and refusing to welcome those sent in the name of Christ.

† The message of this letter is simple but powerful, truth must be lived out, not just believed. Hospitality, faithfulness, and loyalty to the gospel were marks of those walking in the truth (John 13:34-35).

3 John 1:1

The elder, to the beloved Gaius, whom I truly love because we stand together in the truth.

† John identifies himself simply as the elder, showing his pastoral authority in the early church. This kind of leadership was recognized among believers as those who guarded sound teaching and shepherded the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3).

† The phrase love in the truth shows that Christian love isn't separated from doctrine. Love and truth always walk together in the gospel (Ephesians 4:15).

† Early Christian writer Irenaeus wrote that the apostles appointed faithful men to lead the churches so the truth would be preserved among believers.

3 John 1:2

Beloved, I pray that everything goes well for you and that your health is strong, just as your soul is already doing well.

† John's prayer shows the balance between spiritual life and daily life. The condition of Gaius's soul was already strong, and John desired that his physical life would reflect that same blessing (Psalm 1:3).

† This verse reminds us that the early church cared deeply for one another's well-being, not just spiritually but personally.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the apostles taught believers to care for both the soul and the needs of the body.

3 John 1:3

I was very glad when brothers came and testified about how you are living in the truth and continuing to walk in it.

† The phrase walking in the truth means living according to the teaching of Christ, not merely agreeing with it (James 1:22).

† Reports of Gaius's faithfulness were being shared among traveling believers. This shows how connected the early churches were as the gospel spread.

† Eusebius records that messengers often carried letters and reports between churches to strengthen unity among believers.

3 John 1:4

Nothing brings me greater joy than hearing that my children are living according to the truth.

† John refers to believers as his children because he helped lead many of them to faith and maturity (1 Corinthians 4:15).

† The greatest joy for spiritual leaders is seeing believers remain faithful to the truth of Christ.

† Early Christian writings repeatedly emphasize that perseverance in truth was the mark of genuine discipleship.

3 John 1:5

Beloved, you are acting faithfully in everything you do for the brothers, especially when they are strangers.

† Gaius was showing hospitality to traveling teachers who carried the gospel. This was essential in the early church because believers often depended on fellow Christians for support while traveling (Hebrews 13:2).

† Hospitality was considered a direct expression of faith in Christ.

† The Didache, an early Christian document, also instructed believers to receive traveling teachers who came in the name of the Lord.

3 John 1:6

They have testified before the church about your love. You will do well to help them continue their journey in a way that honors God.

† Supporting those who preached the gospel allowed believers to participate in the work even if they weren't the ones traveling.

† This partnership in the gospel is also taught by Paul when he speaks of believers sharing in ministry through support (Philippians 4:15-16).

† Eusebius records that early Christians regularly provided for missionaries as they traveled between cities.

3 John 1:7

They went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from those who do not believe.

† The Name refers to the authority and message of Jesus Christ.

† These teachers relied on believers rather than unbelievers for support so the gospel would never appear to be motivated by

money (Acts 20:33-35).

† Early Christian communities took this seriously, ensuring that gospel workers were supported by the church.

3 John 1:8

Because of this, we should support people like them so we can work together for the truth.

† Supporting gospel workers makes believers partners in the spread of truth.

† The work of the gospel was never meant to be done alone. It has always been a shared mission among the people of God.

† Irenaeus wrote that the churches across the world were united through the same faith and message handed down from the apostles.

3 John 1:9

I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept our authority.

† Diotrephes represents the danger of pride and control within the church.

† Instead of submitting to apostolic teaching, he wanted to elevate himself above others.

† Church history shows that false leadership often begins when individuals seek personal authority rather than faithfulness to the truth.

3 John 1:10

If I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading false accusations against us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers and even stops those who want to help

them, putting them out of the church.

† Diotrephes wasn't just rejecting John, he was actively opposing the work of the gospel.

† Refusing fellowship to faithful believers was a serious issue because it divided the church.

† Early Christian writers warned repeatedly against leaders who sought power rather than truth.

3 John 1:11

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. The one who does good belongs to God, but the one who does evil has not seen God.

† John's instruction is simple, believers must imitate what reflects the character of God.

† This echoes the teaching of Jesus that a tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 7:16-20).

† Genuine faith reveals itself through righteous actions.

3 John 1:12

Everyone speaks well of Demetrius, and the truth itself testifies about him. We also testify about him, and you know our testimony is true.

† Demetrius is presented as the opposite of Diotrephes, a man with a faithful reputation.

† A good reputation among believers was evidence of a life shaped by the truth (1 Timothy 3:7).

† Early Christian communities valued trustworthy witnesses who reflected Christ in their conduct.

3 John 1:13

I had many things to write to you, but I do not want to write them with pen and ink.

† Letters in the early church often prepared the way for personal visits where deeper instruction could take place.

† This reminds us that fellowship among believers has always involved personal connection.

3 John 1:14

I hope to see you soon, and we will speak face to face.

† John looked forward to personal fellowship because truth and encouragement grow stronger when believers gather together.

† The phrase face to face shows the value placed on personal teaching and unity in the early church.

3 John 1:15

Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends there, each one by name.

† The closing greeting shows the close relationships that existed among believers.

† Early Christian communities were often small and deeply connected, knowing one another personally.

† Eusebius wrote that the strength of the early church was found in their unity and shared devotion to Christ.

Historical References

† Irenaeus wrote that the apostles established faithful leaders in the churches to guard the truth that had been delivered to them.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that believers were called not only to believe the truth but to live it through love, hospitality, and faithfulness.

† Eusebius recorded how the early church remained connected through letters, traveling teachers, and shared support for the spread of the gospel.

How It Applies To Us Today

† 3 John reminds us that walking in the truth isn't just about doctrine, it is about how we treat others and how we support the work of the gospel.

† Faithfulness is seen through actions, hospitality, generosity, and standing with those who proclaim the truth.

† Just as Gaius supported those spreading the gospel, believers today continue to participate in God's work by supporting faithful teaching and living in the truth.

Q & A Appendix

Q Why did John write this letter to Gaius?

A John wrote to encourage Gaius for his faithfulness and hospitality toward traveling teachers of the gospel (3 John 1:3-6).

Q What does it mean to walk in the truth?

A Walking in the truth means living according to the teachings of Christ, not just believing them (3 John 1:3; James 1:22).

Q Why was Diotrephes condemned by John?

A Diotrephes rejected apostolic authority, spread false accusations, and refused fellowship to faithful believers (3 John

1:9-10).

Q What example does Demetrius provide?

A Demetrius is an example of a believer whose life and reputation confirmed his faithfulness to the truth (3 John 1:12).

Q Why was hospitality important in the early church?

A Hospitality supported the spread of the gospel by helping traveling teachers and missionaries continue their work (3 John 1:5-8; Hebrews 13:2).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† 3 John 1

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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