

### 3 JOHN

- 1) 1 -- Gaius is not identified -- it was a very common name then. Probably an elder in another Johanine church and/or community. "Loves in truth" is an oblique reference to a life in Christ, who curiously is not mentioned in this letter.
- 2) 3,4 -- Although using the phrase "my little children" implies that he founded the church (or churches) to whom he is writing, the elder doesn't impose his will on them, as was a common thing in those days of total patriarchal dominion over every aspect of home and community life.
- 3) 5-6 -- The "strangers" were probably Christian missionaries or itinerant Christians relying on the hospitality of the host church. They refused aid from "pagans" (probably Gentile non-believers) so that their work would not be contaminated. A seeming contradiction between the elder and Paul: the elder considers belief in Christ to be a "work," whereas Paul distinguishes between "works of the law," by which no one be justified, and "grace", which is God's unmotivated goodness, which cannot be earned but only can be trusted.
- 4) 9-10 -- Not known who Diotriphes is or exactly what he has done to arouse the elder's ire. Probably some doctrinal contention that the elder considered heretical. Possibly a dispute about their respective jurisdictions, or Diotriphes has refused hospitality to the elder and/or his associates.
- 5) 12 -- Demetrius brought the letter to Gaius.