

The Third Epistle of John

Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. (3 John 1:8 NASB)

3 John 13-14 (15)

Someone read 3John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-14 (15)

I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write them to you with pen and ink; but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face. (3 John 1:13-14 NASB)

The fact that John closes his letter to Gaius with almost the same wording as his letter to the Chosen Lady (2 John) indicates what about how John probably closed all his letters which have not been preserved for us in the NT?

That he probably closed them in much the same way.

But the fact that there are minor differences between them suggests what?

Let's look at the 2nd to last verse in 2John:

12. Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.

What similarities do you see?

1. John comments on the brevity of the letter
2. He notes that he has many more things to communicate
3. John says he doesn't want to do so in writing
4. He wants to speak 'face to face' (lit., 'mouth to mouth').
 - a. This expression indicates that John wished to speak intimately with his audience
 - b. How much of our communication is lost in writing?

What differences do you see?

1. Pen and ink (3Jn) vs Paper and ink (2Jn)
 - a. Pen and ink is Lit., "black and a reed"

- i. In those days, ink was made by mixing charcoal dust or soot with gum and water, and a pen was a sharpened reed or stalk.
 - ii. Think how laborious even a short letter would be to write, having to dip your reed in the ink almost every stroke!
- 2. Why do think John says “I HAVE many things to write” in 2John, but “I HAD many things to write” in 3John?
 - a. John may have been referring to his present desire to write in 2Jn, but be looking back to his original intention when he started 3Jn.
 - b. More likely, it is a literary device in which the author places himself in the position of the reader, and in that case, it would take place in the past.
 - c. For whatever reason, John did not feel it necessary to use that device in 2Jn.
- 3. In 3Jn, John says he hopes to see Gaius “shortly;” in 2Jn, he says only that he “hopes” to come and visit the Chosen Lady.
 - a. The same word is used for ‘shortly’ in James 1:23-24. Somebody please read that.
 - b. “Immediately” in the NASB, NIV, and NET. “straightway” in the old KJV.
 - i. Why do you think it is softened in NASB and the NIV?
 - 1. The NET translates is as “right away”
 - 2. Context may require it. Notice that John’s intention is to follow the missionaries on their journey, but he couches it using the word “hope.”
 - 3. He is actively planning a visit, he is just uncertain when the way will open up for it.
 - 4. In any event, there will not be a long interval between the letter arriving and his own arrival.

Let me repeat the question I asked earlier: The fact that there are minor differences between them suggests what?

That John did not merely follow a pattern by rote, but crafted each conclusion to suit the needs of the moment. John is very concerned that he be able to meet the individual needs of his fellow believers.

Why do you think John wants to visit Gaius so soon?

Diotrephes and the trouble he is stirring up. He is creating a crisis that John wants to deal with personally.

Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name. (3 John 1:15 NASB)

“Peace to you (sng)” Instead the common expostulatory farewell (cf., Acts 15:29), John chooses a Jewish blessing (cf., Num 6:26), which had been given a new meaning for Christians by Jesus.

See John 20:19, 21, 26 (same word for ‘peace’ but the plural ‘you’ is used).

For John, this peace is not the mere absence of conflict, but it is the peace that passes

understanding. It is the state of spiritual well-being which flows from the experience of reconciliation and forgiveness. It begins with the believer's reconciliation with the Father through faith in His Son and it shows itself by the believer's peaceful relations with others.

BTW, what is the one 'work' we are commanded to do to be saved?

GJohn 6:28-29

"The friends greet you"

Who are these 'friends'?

1. Members of John's church in Ephesus?
2. Mutual friends of John and Gaius?

I favor the first option, due to the next statement.

How does the NT always refer to fellow members of the Church?

Brothers / Sisters

Why does John refer to them as 'friends'?

He may be following Christ's example in Jn 15:12-17.

But here, I think the disciples are intended, although we may also be considered Christ's friends.

I think it's more likely that John wants to emphasize that even though we ought to love others as we love ourselves, it is just as important that we LIKE one another.

Tell story about a couple weeks ago when Terry remarked that it's easier to love someone when you actually like them.

Christian brothers ought to be characterized by warm mutual affection and care. As the commentator Hodge remarks: "The use of the term 'friends' twice in these closing statements is perhaps one final reminder to Gaius that Christians in every place are or should be a network of friends who are ready to help one another whenever the need arises."

"Greet the friends by name."

Are these friends following Dio, or not?

No, they remained loyal to God's truth and mission.

In extending John's greeting to them, Gaius would have ample opportunity to share the contents of the letter with them, thus demonstrating John's love for them and his fervent disapproval of Dio. This would show the friends they were not alone in standing against Dio. And help is coming!

Does the fact that Gaius is to call them "by name" imply that they were few in number?

John's individual approach unites them with John when he arrives to deal with Dio. As one commentator writes:

"Such individualization is not only tactful in its encouragement to loyalty; it is the mark of the pastoral heart."

Who else said that they "call the sheep by name?"

GJohn 10:3

John is following his Master in this, as he did in all other matters. For John, the unity of believers did not minimize his high regard for individual worth and warm personal friendships.

On this note, John ends his letter to Gaius.