

*Diotrephes and Demetrius: 3 John 9–14*

Grace Chapel

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**INTRODUCTION:**

**REVIEW:**

- A. John prays for Gaius to prosper as his soul prospers, because John's emissaries report that Gaius walks in truth, which gives John great pleasure (3 John 2–4)
- B. Gaius is faithful to believers he knows and to those he does not, so his continuing to receive people who minister in Christ's name that refuse support from Gentile unbelievers will make him their fellow worker (sharing in their reward) (3 John 5–8)

**NEW EXPOSITION: Diotrephes and Demetrius**

- 1. John wrote to the church, but Diotrephes does not receive the apostles or their emissaries, because he seeks pre-eminence among [the elders] (3 John 9)

The letter to which John refers is **not** part of the New Testament. It is **not** 1 or 2 John.

- 2. [In light of Diotrephes not receiving John or his emissaries] John will recount [in a trial] Diotrephes' tattling gossip against the apostles, refusal to receive apostolic emissaries, and excommunicating those who receive the emissaries, if John comes (3 John 10)
  
- 3. Gaius should not imitate Diotrephes' evil, but he should imitate what is good, because the one who does good is of God, but the one who does evil has not seen God (3 John 11)
  
- 4. [Gaius should receive] Demetrius who has a good testimony from the brethren, from the apostles, and from the truth (as a representative from God) (3 John 12)

### Farewell (3 John 13–14)

1. John had much to write to Gaius, but prefers speaking over writing (because he expects to travel to speak with him shortly) (3 John 13–14a)

2. Friends with John greet Gaius and Gaius is to greet friends personally (3 John 14)

Friend = *philos*: John does not sharply distinguish between *philos* and *agapē*

John 20<sup>2</sup> Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom<sub>sg</sub> Jesus loved (*phileō*), and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

John 13<sup>23</sup> Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom<sub>sg</sub> Jesus loved (*agapaō*).

Evidence in 3 John that John does not sharply distinguish between *philos* and *agapē*

As a side note, Paul does not sharply distinguish between *philos* and *agapē* either.

## EXCURSUS: THE NEW TESTAMENT PICTURE OF LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

**Throughout the New Testament, a picture of plural elders emerges. The New Testament does not look favorably upon the idea of one elder becoming pre-eminent over the other elders.**

<sup>1</sup> In John's writing, cf. 3 John 9–10

<sup>2</sup> in Peter's writings, cf. 1 Peter 5:2 [You<sub>pl</sub>] shepherd the flock<sub>sg</sub> of God among you<sub>pl</sub>

<sup>3</sup> in Luke's writings, cf. Acts 14:23 They appointed elders<sub>pl</sub> in every church<sub>sg</sub>

<sup>4</sup> in Luke's writings, cf. Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders<sub>pl</sub> of the church<sub>sg</sub>

Cf. Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which God has made you [elders] overseers, to shepherd the church of God

- 5 in Paul's writings, cf. 1 Timothy 5:17, Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of a double honorarium, especially those who labor in the word and teaching.

	Those who Rule Well	Those who Do Not Rule Well
Those who Labor in Word & Teaching	1	3
Those who Do Not Labor in Word & Teaching	2	4

1. Those who rule well and who labor in word & teaching are especially worthy of DH

Number 1 makes sense

- 2. Those who rule well, but do not labor in the word & teaching are worthy of DH**

**Does number 2 make sense?**

- 3. Those who do not rule well, but labor in word & teaching are unworthy of DH**

**Does number 3 make sense?**

4. Those who do not rule well and do not labor in the word & teaching are unworthy of DH

Number 4 makes sense

**If Paul understood each congregation to have only one elder, the upshot of 2–3 would**

*make ruling more important than teaching*

**If Paul understood each congregation to have more than one elder, the upshot of 2–3 is:**

all elders rule, but some elders are to devote themselves to teaching

*An objection to the last statement may be raised from 1 Timothy 3:2, but the objection comes from a peculiarity in the relationship between Greek and English*

1 Timothy 3:2 mentions *able to teach* as a qualification for elders

The word translated *able to teach* is *didaktikos*, a verbal adjective

A verbal adjectives with a passive sense is *teachable* (able to be taught)

We could render *didaktikos* as *teaching-able*

## CONCLUSION