

Diotrephes and Demetrius: 3 John 9-14

Water of Life

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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 pleases John greatly (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 in the NT. 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 them, 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 God's representative) (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 20:2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom_{sg} 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 13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom_{sg} Jesus loved (*agapaō*).

Evidence in 3 John that John does not sharply distinguish these words.

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

EXCURSUS: THE NT PICTURE OF LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

A picture of plural elders emerges. The NT does not look favorably upon the idea of one elder becoming pre-eminent over the other elders.

1. In John's writing, cf. 3 John 9-10

2. in Peter, cf. 1 Peter 5:2 [You_{pl}] shepherd the flock_{sg} of God among you_{pl}

3a. in Luke's writings, cf. Acts 14:23 They appointed elders_{pl} in every church_{sg}

3b. cf. Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders_{pl} of the church_{sg}

3c. 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

4. 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 Ruling Well	Those not Ruling Well
Those laboring in Word & Teaching	1	3
Those not laboring in Word & Teaching	2	4

1. Those ruling well & laboring 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. Ones not ruling well & not laboring in the word & teaching unworthy of DH
Number 4 makes sense

If each congregation had only one elder, the upshot of 2-3 would
make ruling more important than teaching

If each congregation had 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 is sometimes 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. If it has a passive sense, it would be *teachable* (able to be taught), not *teaching-able*

CONCLUSION