

3 John Verse by Verse

Verse 9

1. John now turns his attention to a man by the name of Diotrephes. This man had obviously infiltrated a local church and managed to take it over.
2. He had usurped authority of this church to the point that the apostle John had written a letter to the church, but Diotrephes intercepted the letter and would not allow John to have contact with the church body.
3. John said that Diotrephes “...receiveth us not.” This was a very serious charge - to not receive one of the twelve apostles. Luke 10:3-12
4. Why was Diotrephes so antagonistic towards John and others who were trying to spread God’s truth? The key is in the middle of this verse, “...who loveth to have the preeminence.” What does this mean?
 - “Preeminent” means “having paramount rank; dignity; or importance.”
 - If I love to have the preeminence, this simply means that I love to have superiority over everybody else.
 - What is the middle letter in “preeminence?” It is the same as the middle letter in the word “pride.” Diotrephes had an “I” problem!
5. Diotrephes would not receive John or other missionaries because he was a lording leader that had to be the center of everything.
6. Diotrephes is a mirror image of the attitudes of Satan and the antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:4). He desired to **be served** rather than serve others. This is not the way of Christ. Matthew 20:25-28; cf. 1 Peter 5:1-5
7. What diametrical opposites. Gaius had a servant’s heart, doing anything he could to help fellow servants of Christ get the truth out to others. Diotrephes had a satanic heart, desiring to be served and be superior over others.

Verse 10

- In this verse John continues to describe Diotrephes.
1. He had an evil, vicious, lying tongue. John said “*prating against us with malicious words.*”
 - The word “prating” carries the idea of idle chatter. This man would run his mouth about people - saying hateful things - but they was no substance to it. John 8:44
 2. He had a discontent spirit. John said, “...*not content therewith...*”
 - Again, this is a picture of the spirit of Satan. Satan was not satisfied with his heavenly position, but desired to usurp God’s throne. Just as Satan would do anything to obtain power and control, Diotrephes was the same way.
 3. He had a selfish, “me-first” attitude. John said, “...*neither doth he himself receive the brethren...*”
 - This man was self-consumed and did not want anybody taking the attention away from him.

4. He had a contentious, divisive spirit. John said, “...and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”
 - Satan loves to sow division and discord among people.
 - It is interesting how that Diotrephes emulates the seven abominable things that God hates in Proverbs 6:16-19. The last one is “*he that soweth discord among the brethren.*”
5. Is it possible for a believer today to possess some of these ungodly attitudes? You better believe it! Paul commanded us to not “*give place to the devil.*” If we aren’t walking in the spirit, we can become a Diotrephes real quick.

Verse 11

1. Clearly this verse is a reference back to Diotrephes and the evil he was doing.
2. Diotrephes was not of God and didn’t know God. How would Gaius know this? By his evil deeds. Verse 10 says “*I will remember his deeds which he doeth.*”
3. This is a recurring theme we see in the Hebrew epistles. In the last days, satanic delusion will be so great that there will have to be a way for true believers to discern counterfeit Christians who are really of Satan. 2 Peter 2:1-2; Jude 4
4. In the book of 1 John, John gave the believing flock of Israel a series of tests to help them to have this discernment. These spiritual tests will provide the little flock with the ability to discern false prophets and teachers.
5. Jesus taught the little flock that “*by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matthew 7:15-23), and also gave them an illustration of this (Matthew 7:24-27). Notice the key is hearing and doing. cf. James 1:22-24, 2:17-20; 1 John 3:18-19, 23-24
6. In the last days, those who are of Christ’s little flock and truly have faith will be supernaturally empowered to keep Christ’s commandments. If a person is not a **doer** of the Word, then he never really had faith. He is a counterfeit. 1 John 2:3-5, 19-20, 26-29
7. John says, “...*he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*” What does this mean? It obviously is not talking about a literal, physical, sighting of God. Compare this with Jesus’ words in John 14:7-10.
8. If a person hasn’t seen God in the last days, it means that they are not a true branch in the vine (Jesus Christ). They are not of Christ’s little flock, but rather belong to the devil’s family. They are counterfeit and of the spirit of antichrist.
9. Do we see this same emphasis on keeping the commandments and identifying counterfeit Christians by their deeds in Paul’s writings to the church? No! In fact, just the opposite.
 - Paul declared that a person is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Romans 3:28
 - Paul taught that Christ abolished in his flesh the enmity, “*even the law of commandments contained in ordinances...*” Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14
 - Paul emphatically states that a man in this dispensation is “*not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...*” Galatians 2:16
10. There is no way in the dispensation of grace that a person can discern if another person is a true believer or not. Nowhere does Paul instruct us to be “fruit

inspectors.” The Corinthians were extremely carnal, yet they were “in Christ.”
1 Corinthians 3:1, 23

Verse 12

1. Who is this man Demetrius? John mentions him in this one verse and there is no other information about him.
2. Obviously he is reassuring Gaius that Demetrius is also a lover of truth. Maybe Demetrius had also been excommunicated from the church by Diotrophes or maybe Demetrius had sought help from Gaius.
3. What a wonderful commendation when John says that Demetrius had a good report of all men and of the truth itself. There is no greater compliment than this!

Verse 13-14

1. John had a lot he wanted to say to Gaius, but he didn't want to take the time to write them all down. He wanted to get this quick note of encouragement off to Gaius but then go and see Gaius face to face.
2. Then John basically says, “Our friends with us say hello to you. Our friends with you - tell them we said hello.”
3. John uses the word “friends” also in the gospel of John. John 15:13-15
 - Who are friends of Jesus? Those who keep His commandments.