

# English: Unlocked Literal Bible for 3 John

Formatted for Translators

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Bible Text: The English Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB)

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Notes: English ULB Translation Notes

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# Introduction to 3 John

## Part 1: General Introduction

### Outline of the Book of 3 John

1. Introduction (1:1)
2. Encouragement and instructions to show hospitality (1:2-8)
3. Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12)
4. Conclusion (1:13-14)

### Who wrote the Book of 3 John?

The letter does not give the name of the author. The author only identified himself as "the elder" (1:1). The letter was probably written by the Apostle John near the end of his life.

### What is the Book of 3 John about?

John wrote this letter to a believer named Gaius. He instructed Gaius to be hospitable to fellow believers who were traveling through his area.

### How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "3 John" or "Third John." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Third Letter from John" or "The Third Letter John Wrote."

## Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

### What is hospitality?

Hospitality was an important concept in the ancient Near East. It was important to be friendly towards foreigners or outsiders and provide help to them if they needed it. In 2 John, John discouraged Christians from showing hospitality to false teachers. In 3 John, John encouraged Christians to show hospitality to faithful teachers.

## Part 3: Important Translation Issues

### How does the author use family relationships in his letter?

The author used the terms "brother" and "children" in a way that can be confusing. The scriptures often used the term "brothers" to refer to Jews. But in this letter, John used the word to refer to Christians. Also, John called some believers his "children." These are believers he taught to obey Christ.

John also used the term "Gentile" in a way that could be confusing. The scriptures often used the term "Gentile" to refer to people who are not Jews. But in this letter, John used the word to refer to those who did not believe in Jesus.

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## 3 John

**1** <sup>1</sup>The elder to beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:

<sup>2</sup>Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be healthy, just as it is well with your soul.<sup>3</sup>For I rejoiced greatly when brothers came and bore witness to your truth, just as you walk in truth.<sup>4</sup>I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children walk in the truth.

<sup>5</sup>Beloved, you practice faithfulness whenever you labor for the brothers and for strangers<sup>6</sup>who have borne witness of your love in the presence of the church. You do well to send them off on their journey in a manner worthy of God,<sup>7</sup>because it was for the sake of the name that they went out, taking nothing from the Gentiles.<sup>8</sup>We therefore should welcome such as these so that we will be fellow workers for the truth.

<sup>9</sup>I wrote something to the congregation, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us.<sup>10</sup>So if I come, I will call attention to the deeds he is doing, falsely accusing us with wicked words. Not satisfied with that, he not only refuses to welcome the brothers himself, but he also stops those who want to welcome them and drives them out of the church.

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the evildoer has not seen God.<sup>12</sup>Demetrius received a good testimony from everyone and by the truth itself. We also testify about him, and you know that our testimony is true.

<sup>13</sup>I had many things to write to you, but I do not wish to write them to you with pen and ink.<sup>14</sup>But I hope to see you soon, and we will speak face to face.<sup>15</sup>May peace be with you. The friends greet you. Greet our friends there by name.

3 John 1:1	3 John 1:3
General Information:	brothers came
This is a personal letter from John to Gaius. All instances of "you" and "your" refer to Gaius and are singular.	"fellow believers came." These people were probably all male.
The elder	you walk in truth
This refers to John, the apostle and disciple of Jesus. He refers to himself as "elder" either because of his old age or because he is a leader in the church. The name of the author can be made explicit: "I, John the elder, am writing."	Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "you are living your life according to God's truth"
Gaius	3 John 1:4
This is a fellow believer to whom John is writing this letter.	my children
whom I love in truth	John speaks of those he taught to believe in Jesus as though they were his children. This emphasizes his love and concern for them. It could also be that he himself led them to the Lord. Alternate translation: "my spiritual children"
"whom I truly love"	3 John 1:5
3 John 1:2	Connecting Statement:
all may go well with you and that you may be healthy	John's purpose in writing this letter is to compliment Gaius in the way he took care of traveling Bible teachers; then he talks about two people, one evil and one good.
"you may do well in all things and be healthy"	
just as it is well with your soul	
"just as you are doing well spiritually"	

Beloved

Here this is used as a term of endearment for a fellow believer.

you practice faithfulness

"you are doing what is faithful to God" or "you are being loyal to God"

labor for the brothers and for strangers

"help fellow believers and those you do not know"

3 John 1:6

You do well to send them

John is thanking Gaius for his normal practice of helping these believers.

3 John 1:7

because it was for the sake of the name that they went out

Here "the name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "for they have gone out to tell people about Jesus"

taking nothing

receiving no gifts or help

the Gentiles

Here "Gentiles" means non-Jews who do not believe in Christ.

3 John 1:8

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to John and those with him, and possibly includes all believers.

so that we will be fellow workers for the truth

"so that we will cooperate with them in announcing God's truth to people"

3 John 1:9

General Information:

The word "us" refers to John and those with him and does not include Gaius.

congregation

This refers to Gaius and the group of believers who met together to worship God.

Diotrephes

He was a member of the congregation.

who loves to be first among them

"who loves to be the most important one among them" or "who loves to act as though he's their leader"

3 John 1:10

falsely accusing us with wicked words

"and how he says evil things about us that certainly are not true"

refuses to welcome the brothers

"does not welcome the fellow believers"

stops those who want to welcome them

"stops those who want to welcome the believers"

drives them out of the church

"he forces them to leave the congregation"

3 John 1:11

Beloved

Here this is used as a term of endearment for a fellow believer. See how you translated this in 3 John 1:5.

do not imitate what is evil

"do not copy the evil things that people do"

but what is good

There are words left out but they are understood. Alternate translation: "but imitate what is good" or "but imitate the good things that people do"

is of God

"belongs to God"

has not seen God

"does not belong to God" or "does not believe in God"

3 John 1:12

General Information:

Here "we" refers to John and those with him and does not include Gaius.

Demetrius received a good testimony from everyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All who know Demetrius testify that he is a good man" or "Every believer who knows Demetrius speaks well of him"

Demetrius

This is probably a man whom John wants Gaius and the congregation to welcome when he comes to visit.

by the truth itself

"the truth itself speaks well of him." Here "truth" is described as a person speaking. Alternate translation: "everyone who knows the truth knows he is a good person"

We also testify about him

What John is confirming is implied and can be made specific here. Alternate translation: "We also testify about Demetrius" or "We also speak well of Demetrius"

3 John 1:13

General Information:

This is the end of John's letter to Gaius. He gives some final remarks and closes with a greeting.

I do not wish to write them to you with pen and ink

John does not wish to write these other things at all. He is not saying that he would write them with something other than pen and ink.

3 John 1:14

I hope to see you soon

John wants to visit him, but he does not know with certainty that he would be able to visit him. Alternate translation: "I plan to come to you" or "I want to come to you"

face to face

"Face to face" here is an idiom, meaning "in person." Alternate translation: "in person"

3 John 1:15

May peace be with you

"May God give you peace"

The friends greet you

"The friends here greet you"

Greet our friends there by name

"Greet each of the believers there for me"