3 John

By James West

Key message of the book: '**Love those who are of the truth.**'

Background information:

John wrote this epistle, possibly from Ephesus, around <u>A.D. 90</u>. This is a <u>personal letter to Gaius</u>, who was no doubt a member (possibly a deacon) of the church in which <u>Diotrephes was seeking pre-eminence</u>. The purpose of writing is: 1. To commend Gaius' hospitality, and to encourage him to receive and support godly teachers. 2. To point out to Gaius the error of following after Diotrephes. John is very concerned about Diotrephes' self-seeking, self-appointed leadership in the church there, and promised to deal with it when he next visited. 3. To recommend Demetrius, possibly a travelling preacher, who also may have delivered this letter.

There is a great stress placed on the concept of 'truth' in this short epistle. The need is to love the truth, walk in the truth, help those who are preaching and exemplifying the truth, and reject those who are doing the opposite!

Key word: <u>Truth; it is used 7 times</u>, including the word 'true' in verse 12.

Outline of the book:

Love those who are of the truth. How?
1. Walk in the truth. (vv. 1-4) Why?
    a. It rejoices the father's heart.
    b. It is the basis for true fellowship with others.
2. Show charity to those who are of the truth. (vv. 5-8)
    a. It is a testimony worthy of God. (v. 6)
    b. It is a worthy service to God's servants. (v. 7)
    c. It makes us fellow-helpers in the truth. (v. 8)
3. Don't imitate those who are not of the truth. (vv. 9-11)
    a. They seek pre-eminence. (v. 9)
    b. They persecute the true brethren. (v. 10)
    c. They have not seen God (v. 11)
4. Desire the fellowship of truth's children. (vv. 12-14)
    a. Their lives will accord with Scripture. (v. 12)
    b. Seek to be with them. (vv. 13-14)