



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: 3 John 1:1, 9-15 NET

From the elder, to Gaius my dear brother...⁹ I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not acknowledge us. ¹⁰ Therefore, if I come, I will call attention to the deeds he is doing — the bringing of unjustified charges against us with evil words! And not being content with that, he not only refuses to welcome the brothers himself, but hinders the people who want to do so and throws them out of the church! ¹¹ Dear friend, do not imitate what is bad but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does what is bad has not seen God. ¹² Demetrius has been testified to by all, even by the truth itself. We also testify to him, and you know that our testimony is true. ¹³ I have many things to write to you, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink. ¹⁴ But I hope to see you right away, and we will speak face to face. ¹⁵ Peace be with you. The friends here greet you. Greet the friends there by name. (3 John 1:1, 9-15 NET)

SUMMARY:

John's final letter reveals a clash between church leaders: the Elder, representing the values of the Johannine community, and Diotrephes, the domineering leader of a satellite church. Diotrephes challenges the Elder's authority, maligns him, withholds hospitality from his envoys, and expels those who resist his strict control. His authoritarian style starkly contrasts with the Elder's servant leadership.

This conflict is more than a local dispute; 3 John stands in the New Testament canon as a prophetic protest against one-man rule within the church. It condemns Diotrephes' conduct, but more significantly, it warns of the rise of monarchical bishops — a warning that history, ultimately, did not heed. Around 100 AD, Diotrephes symbolized the emergence of ruling bishops, a pitfall relevant in today's Christianity. John's letters preserve a unique vision of an egalitarian church rooted on truth & love, resisting the allure of ambition and hierarchical dominance represented by Diotrephes. Let us heed John's prophetic warning and embrace the Elder's example.

I.3 John is a Protest against Ruling Bishops

•“It’s quite possible...3 John was the first protest against the monarchical episcopacy [ruling bishop] which became the norm...of the Great Church...[So,] its something of a wonder that 3 John... squeezed into the NT canon.” [James Dunn, *Neither Jew nor Greek*, pp. 781-2]

•“3 John...is best seen as... anti-institutional...protesting against the increasing influence of early Catholicism... [which] begins within the NT itself... [But,] so too does a protest against early Catholicism ... most strongly probably in 3 John.” [James DG. Dunn, *Unity & Diversity*, p. 359]

II.Diotrephes – the Notorious Church Leader (3 John 9-10)

?“One of the most notorious leaders of the early Christian church Diotrephes makes his appearance in 3 John.” –Barth Campbell

A.The Elder’s complaints against Diotrephes (3 Jn. 9-10)

?“I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not acknowledge us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call attention to the deeds he is doing — the bringing of unjustified charges against us with evil words! And not being content with that, he not only refuses to welcome the brothers himself, but hinders the people who want to do so and throws them out of the church!” (3 John 9-10)

1.“First, Diotrephes asserts his own primacy; — “he loves to be first among them”

2.second, he does not acknowledge the Elder’s authority; — “doesn’t acknowledge us”

3.third, he is charged with spreading false claims...; “unjustified charges...with evil words!”

4.fourth, he refuses to welcome the [travelling] brethren;

5.fifth, he obstructs those who try [welcome them]; &

6.sixth, he casts them out of the church if they do (3 John 9-10) ...

•[These are] the Elder’s complaints against Diotrephes; ...Diotrephes’ perspective... may have been different.” [Paul N. Anderson, “You Have the Words of Eternal Life!” *Neotestamentica*, Vol. 41.1 (2007) p. 24]

•Diotrephes made himself the defining value of that church; he was “building a ring fence around it by making personal loyalty to Diotrephes the defining test of membership.” [DA. Carson, *Message of the Church*, p. cxii]

•“John’s use of the verb ‘ekballei’ (he throws out [v. 10]) indicates a forceful expulsion or exclusion, suggesting that Diotrephes had arrogated to himself [the authority] to expel individuals from the church community.” [AJ. Lamont-Turner, *Bible Study Guide: 1, 2 & 3 John*, p.]

•“Diotrephes...had sufficient power...to excommunicate people who disagreed with him. Anyone wanting to be received into his church... had to pass his inspection & interrogation.” [John Phillips, *Exploring...John*, p. 223]

?“Complaints against Diotrephes are a disturbing foretaste... of arrogance & abuse of power which litter the late history of Christian leadership.” [James DG. Dunn, *Neither Jew nor Greek*, p. 782]

B.“Diotrephes is a standing warning...”

?Diotrephes is a standing warning against the danger of confusing personal ambition with zeal for... the gospel.” –I. Howard Marshall

?“It’s quite possible...3 John was the first protest against the monarchical episcopacy [ruling bishop]” –J. Dunn.

•“Diotrephes has gone down in history as the man who wanted to lead the church...It ...[is] natural in any local church for a person...possess[ing] gifts of leadership or...fired with ambition to seek a position of control & establish himself as the leader... Diotrephes is a standing warning against the danger of confusing personal ambition with zeal for...the gospel.” [I. Howard Marshall, *Epistles of John*, pp. 89-90]

C.The “Diotrephes Syndrome” –Relevant Today

•There seems to “be an American obsession for church members to admire a strong & powerful

church leader. His word is law. He acts swiftly & persuasively. He gets things done. Committees are for those minor things that don't concern him. He sets the program, & the program operates around him. Many are quite willing to meekly follow, giving modified support to this ecclesiastical superstar ['celebrity pastor']. One-man ministries abound for several reasons: tradition, lazy parishioners, & the attitude that 'the pastor's paid to do it.' Almost by default, some pastors become builders and defenders of their own little kingdoms. Diotrephes knew nothing of the NT pattern of shared ministry..." [Philip W. Comfort, Wendell C. Hawley, 1-3 John, p. 399]

D.How a Church becomes a Cult

•"Abusing power is a principal temptation facing church leaders. They see the need for clear direction, tight programs, solid priorities, firm planning & high commitment, & they see them so clearly that... loyalty slides away from Christ onto themselves.... They discover a dangerous truth: as Diotrephes discovered, it works ...So they make it a tactic...work my way or not at all. Or, like Diotrephes, only people I approve... are welcome here. This is a pure power play as a church wraps itself around a leader...[it] turns into a cult." [D. Carson, Op. cit., p. cxii]

III.The Elder vs Diotrephes — personal authority vs. institutional authority

?“In 3 John we see a conflict between a form of institutional authority (found in Diotrephes) and ‘personal’ authority (found in the Elder).” –Paul Treblico

A.Diotrephes’ Institutional Authority vs the Elder’s Personal Authority

•In 3 John “we learn that Diotrephes has refused to accept the elder’s letter or some itinerant ‘brothers’ & ‘likes to put himself first’ (3 Jn. 9-10). It’s suggested that Diotrephes represents... structured local authority ... not found in 1 Jn., & that in him we see an early form of mono-episcopacy [mono (one) episcopacy (oversight) –[a single ruling bishop]. On this view Diotrephes is opposed to the Elder’s form of authority, since... [the Elder’s] authority [is] not limited by appointment to a particular office or a particular place, but... based on the individual, & their gifts, or in the fact they were a tradition-bearer. In 3 Jn. we... [are] seeing a conflict between a form of institutional authority (found in Diotrephes) and ‘personal’ authority (found in the Elder).” [Paul Treblico, Early Christians in Ephesus..., p. 484]

B.Diotrephes Disregards the Elder’s personal authority

•In “the dispute between the Elder & Diotrephes in 3 Jn. ...the elder clearly lacks institutional authority, even though Diotrephes is in some sense within the Elder’s personal sphere of influence ... This is probably because the form of personal authority on which the Elder relies...is easily disregarded.” [Paul Treblico, “Johannine, Pauline ...Forms of Christianity,” in C. Koester (ed.) Oxford Handbook of...Revelation p. 197]

•“The key here is... that ‘personal’ authority can be easily disregarded. Although the elder perceives himself as having authority beyond his own community... it is personal authority... [which] must be acknowledged by the recipients, it is different ...from authority conferred through an institution, by appointment to an office, which

...is harder to defy... [The Elder] has authority in his own context, but [in] Diotrephes’ context he can [only]

threaten to visit... The Elder cannot ‘pull rank’ over Diotrephes... [who] does have some formal authority within his own sphere... he can exclude ‘brothers’ from ‘the church’... Diotrephes is a leader in this local context ... We have 2 different forms of authority at work & the relationship between the 2 has not been [established] ... The whole overall institutional structure...is not particularly well defined... The Elder writes [to Gaius about] Diotrephes, but seems to have no authority over him.”

[Paul Treblico, Early Christians in Ephesus, pp. 485-6]

•“While Diotrephes may have considerable authority within his own house church, the Elder clearly lacks institutional authority in Diotrephes’ setting...because the form of authority on which the Elder

relies (tradition-bearing, & thus something related to him personally) is easily disregarded.” [Paul Treblico, Op. cit., p. 490]

•“The revered author of the Johannine letters (John the Elder) discovered to his dismay that church leader Diotrephes would not submit to his authority.” [Graydon F. Snyder, People are Holy, p. 183]

C.The Elder’s View & Exercise of Authority

•“While the Elder speaks with authority, he does not come across as dictatorial. In fact, given the threat that Diotrephes posed it is remarkable that the Elder does not refer to any special authority, as Paul does when his role as an apostle had been challenged.” [John Christopher Thomas, 1 Jn., 2 Jn., 3 Jn., p. 20]

•“3 John... indicates [an Elder] with very limited powers, having authority to intervene in congregational affairs, yet all the author can do is to raise the issue with the congregation; it appears that [the Elder] possessed no power of his own to excommunicate or depose Diotrephes.” [David WT. Brattston, Rise of Bishops, p. 4]

•“Although apostles & church officers such as bishop are mentioned...[by] Paul, these titles do not appear in the Johannine letters, a quite remarkable omission... The possibility that the Elder deliberately eschews the title ‘apostle’ has...been suggested. Perhaps he represents a different... conception of church authority based on... spiritual endowment & original witness... Given such a view of authority, does Diotrephes represent a different concept of church authority or only a rival claim?” [D. Moody Smith, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd John, p. 155]

•“Usually the NT speaks of the church as a community of sisters & brothers... In 3 John... the church is not a hierarchy of officials governing... The image of brothers & sisters is surpassed by that of the church as a community of ‘friends’ (v. 15, cf. Jn. 15:15).” [Tom Hanks, Subversive Gospel, p. 237]

•The Elder “goes to extraordinary lengths to dialogue with & respond to his ‘opponent’ Diotrephes” – John Thomas

IV.Diotrephes – Prototype of Emerging Church Leadership

?John’s “Complaints against Diotrephes are a disturbing foretaste... of arrogance & abuse of power which litter the... history of Christian leadership.” –James Dunn

A.Days of Diotrephes are not over

•“I’d love to be able to say the days of Diotrephes are over, that they died in the 1st-century, & that his spirit never made it out of those two verses in 3 John. Sadly, the spirit of Diotrephes outlived that era & continues into our own day.” [Charles R. Swindoll, Insights on 1, 2 & 3 John, p. 154]

B.Diotrephes — the Prototype Monarchical Bishop

•“The power wielded by Diotrephes is similar to that later...assumed by monarchical bishops.” — C. Clifton Black

•“Does the sentence (vv. 9-10) conceal the first clearly recorded case of a man ruling a church as a single (‘monarchical’ – ‘monarch-like’) bishop?” [Ronald R. Williams, Letters of John & James, p. 70]

•“Could Diotrephes be the prototype of a monarchical bishop?... [‘Expels them from the church’ (v. 10)] sounds rather like excommunication ...and squires nicely with the argument for Diotrephes as a proto-monarchical [reigning] bishop ...If those being ejected are community members, and if Diotrephes alone is responsible for their ejection and if ... this power of ejection is conceded to Diotrephes by the [church] community... the irresistible conclusion is that the power wielded by Diotrephes is extraordinary & similar to that... later came to be assumed by monarchical bishops. By comparison it is by no means clear that [the Elder] has removed anyone from the church or has the power to do so: his authority... extends...[to] threatening to lay... Diotrephes’ conduct before the congregation (v. 10a).” [C. Clifton Black, “Johannine Epistles...,” in Biblical Theology, p. 20]

C.Diotrephes depicts the ‘Ruling Church Bishop’ of the future

?“Diotrephes provides us with our one NT glimpse of hierarchical Christianity, with a sobering reminder of the self-seeking which ecclesiastical [church] hierarchies so easily foster.” –Zane Hodges

- “In 3 John the problem appears to be more than personality clash, a power play between Diotrephes and the Elder ...Diotrephes was moving down the line of [church] development most clearly represented by Ignatius –i.e., Diotrephes was trying to exert the authority which Ignatius wanted to attribute to the local bishop...” [James Dunn, Op. cit., p. 781]
- In 3 John “in addition to...travelling ministers... the mono-episcopal organizational counsel of Ignatius of Antioch appears on the scene in the likes of primacy-loving Diotrephes.” –Paul N. Anderson
- “Diotrephes is a church leader, a rival of the Elder, perhaps a budding monarchial [reigning] bishop, who refuses to accept the Elder’s representatives & excommunicates those who do receive them.” – M Eugene Boring
- “The mono-episcopate [single ruling bishop] is first mentioned in the letters of Ignatius (106-13 AD) as an emerging pattern of governance. Some see the negative side of the mono-episcopate in Diotrephes’ ‘love of eminence’ (3 Jn. 9-10).” [Daniel Patte (ed.) Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity, Vol. 2, p. 836]
- Raymond “Brown sees 3 John...as a struggle between the Johannine Elder and Diotrephes over church order; the primacy-loving Diotrephes was... on the way to being incorporated into the great church (R. Brown 1982, 69–115).” [Paul N. Anderson, Community that R. Brown Left Behind, p. 8]

D.The Ruling Bishop becomes the Norm in 2nd-Century AD.

- “After the end of the 1st-century... hierarchical authorities appear[ed]... In the 2nd decade of the 2nd-century [110-119 AD] Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, made clear his authoritative position... Though Ignatius was something of a maverick, from that time on the power of the bishops began to override the self-governing style of the congregation.” [Graydon F. Snyder, People are Holy, p. 183]
- “Evidence from the 2nd-century suggests...a wide variety of [church] models existed throughout the Roman Empire. Yet the one to prevail was the 3-tiered hierarchical model. In this model the bishop served as leader of the local community...assisted by presbyters...(elders) & deacons... This model was established in the Antioch of Ignatius as he underscores emphatically the necessity of gathering... around a single bishop. By the end of the 2nd-century this 3-tiered form...spread to most [places] throughout the empire &...soon would become the sole authoritative manner of organizing local [church] communities.” [Kevin Madigan, Medieval Christianity, p. 14]

E.The Ruling Bishop displacing the Spirit

- From “Where the Spirit is, there is the Church” – Irenaeus of Lyon [Svein Rise, Key Theological Thinkers, p.]
- To: “Where the Bishop is, there is the Church” – Ignatius of Antioch [Letter to the Smyrnaeans 8, JR. Willis tr.]
- “The...2nd & 3rd-centuries [saw]...the growing importance of episcopal leadership in the early Church... The office of the bishop united charismatic [Spirit] & administrative [office/positional] authority in a single figure. Yet the concept of apostolic succession ...placed increasing emphasis on the office rather than the person of the bishop, whose status rested on his hierarchical relationship with the apostles rather than his own virtue.” [“Episcopal Leadership,” Scott F. Johnson (ed.) Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity, p. 879]

V.A Biblical Basis for the Ruling Bishop?

A.Church Leadership based on the ‘Kingdom Keys’ (Matt. 16)

- “It is probable that...[Diotrephes] has constructed his positional form of leadership on the basis of the tradition, or at least the sentiment, of the Matthean ‘keys to the Kingdom’ passage (Matt. 16:17-19), and that he feels justified in wielding his authority in [the church governed by Christ].” [Paul N. Anderson, “Sitz im Leben of the Johannine Bread of Life Discourse,” George Fox School of Theology #105 (1997) p. 54]
- “Diotrephes who ‘loves to be first’ assets his hierarchical approach to leadership at the expense of Johannine believers, likely bolstered by a structural rendering of Matthew 16:17-19.” Paul N.

Anderson, "Discernment- Orientated Leadership..." in J. van der Watt (ed.) Rethinking the Ethics of John, p. 8]

B.The Kingdom Keys entrusted to Peter (Matt. 16:18-19 CSB)

•"I [Jesus] also say to you that you are Peter, & on this rock I will build my church, & the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, & whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, & whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:18-19 CSB)

• "Peter is given the authority to admit entrance into the kingdom through preaching the gospel... 'Whatever you bind ... whatever you loose.' Peter also has authority to exercise discipline concerning right & wrong conduct for those in the kingdom... Jesus delegates authority to human leaders in the church who are called to govern his church on earth, under his ultimate authority..." [ESV Study Bible, p. 1855]

C.Diotrephes Appropriates the 'Kingdom Keys'

•"The Elder... address[es] the actions & words of Diotrephes the primacy-lover (3 Jn. 9-10). Just as Peter was appointed 'first' among the Twelve in Matt. 10:2, a local church leader who 'loves to be first' [i.e., Diotrephes] has apparently been saying bad things about the brothers & forbidding their coming to his church. He even casts out members of his own community who take them in, & the Elder promises to pay him a visit, having written to the 'church' whence Diotrephes derives his episcopal authority... Around this time, Ignatius ...called for the appointing of one bishop in every church – this episcopal leader would oversee the congregation & hold people accountable to standards of faith & practice. Given that Ignatius seems to build upon Peter's having received the 'keys of the kingdom' (Mt. 16:17-19) its likely that Diotrephes saw himself as appropriating those keys in keeping order within his church..." [Paul N. Anderson, John's Gospel in New Perspective, p. xx]

VI.The Elder John Reacts to the Ruling Bishop

A.John's Writings – Reaction & Protest against the Ruling Bishop

•"It's quite possible...3 John was the first protest against the monarchical episcopacy [ruling bishop] which became the norm...of the Great Church." [James Dunn, Neither Jew nor Greek, pp. 781-2]

•"3 John...is best seen as... anti-institutional...protesting against the increasing influence of early Catholicism... [which] begins within the NT itself... [But,] so too does a protest against early Catholicism ... most strongly probably in 3 John." [James DG. Dunn, Unity & Diversity, p. 359]

•"The Johannine assemblies saw themselves as...groups of believers... without [church] officials. [So,] its quite possible that 3 John was the first protest against the monarchical episcopacy [ruling bishop] which became the norm for the... Great Church... Complaints against Diotrephes are a disturbing foretaste... of arrogance & abuse of power which litter the late history of Christian leadership." [J. Dunn, Neither Jew nor Gentile, p. 781]

•"The emergence of hierarchical structures of leadership created new sets of crises within the Johannine situation... Apparently, Diotrephes, who 'loves to be the first' (3 John 1:9-10), was one of these emerging [hierarchical] leaders... The Johannine Elder experienced the ways in which [Diotrephes] wielded his authority as problematic. Diotrephes is reportedly spread malicious rumors about Johannine Christians forbidding his own church members from extending them hospitality, and he even excommunicated any who took them in. If he [Diotrephes] claimed Petrine authority as a means of staving off other threats [Judaizers, false prophets, etc.], one could see how the 4th Evangelist would seek to correct such abuses... The priesthood of every believer in the 4th Gospel... functioned to counter the narrowing of apostolic authority to a hierarchical few within the growing Christian movement in the late-1st-century situation." [Paul N. Anderson, Riddles of the 4th Gospel, p. 139]

B.John's Alternative Model of Church Governance

?It's a "mistake to assume there was only one apostolic ecclesial approach to the organizational & community life of the early church. The Johannine Gospel poses a Spirit-based alternative to emerging structural leadership." [Paul N. Anderson, *Christology of the 4th Gospel*, p. 341]
 ?"What we do see...[is a] multiplicity of ecclesial models of organization within the early church." – Paul Anderson

C. Jesus' Mother entrusted to the Beloved Disciple (John 19:25-27 CSB)

•25 Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother... & Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother & the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home." (John 19:25-27 CSB)

D. Peter & John – Two Models of Church Governance

•The Gospels of "John & Matthew represent two distinct –& perhaps competitive – understandings of [church structure] ... Peter & the Beloved Disciple serve... as models of church leadership. For the type of Christianity represented by Matthew, Peter assumes the role of 'successor to Jesus'... [&] those who follow... receive the mantles of institutional authority & pastoral responsibility. By the time of Ignatius... the Petrine system of the mono- episcopate [single bishop] gained considerable acceptance... In John, however... the Johannine model is not hierarchical like the Petrine, but familial. It involves relationships to Christ and one another... not based on power, but on love, &... church leaders must have debated ... these two models. In fact, such church-governance issues were most likely the source of [church] tensions underlying 3 John... Diotrophes was probably ... threatened by... the questioning of his ecclesial authority and the advocating of a pneumatic & egalitarian [church culture]." [Paul N. Anderson, *Christology of the 4th Gospel*, p. 249]

E. Jesus entrusts the Keys to Peter, his Mother to the Beloved Disciple

•In John "Jesus ...entrusts something to a leading disciple as a measure of [church] authority, but rather than entrust ...keys to Peter, Jesus entrusts his very mother to the Beloved Disciple at the cross (Jn. 19:25-27). If this is indeed the coin of [church] authority, as in... Matth[ew's] presentation of the Keys to the Kingdom the emphasis [in John] is upon relationality & familial care, rather than structuralism & institutional hierarchy." [Paul N. Anderson, "Petrine Ministry & Christo-crazy," *George Fox School of Theology* (2005) p. 6]

•"While institutional keys serve as a metaphor of instrumental [church] influence & authority, entrusted to Peter [Mt. 16:17-19] (& those who follow in his wake), the entrustment of Jesus' mother to the Beloved Disciple (& by extension to all believers) serves as a metaphor of relational and familial ecclesial influence and authority." [Paul N. Anderson, "You Have the Words of Eternal Life!" *Neotestamentica*, Vol. 41.1 (2007) p. 16]

•John's Gospel "narrative poses a number of [church] motifs... in direct tension with rising institutionalism in the late 1st century... Christianity... These...[are] pushing back against hierarchical developments... in Matt. 16:17-19 & 18:15-17 ... In John's presentation...the will of Jesus for his followers, organic & relational images for the church include sheep & shepherd (Jn. 10) & vine & branches (Jn. 15) ...Rather than receiving ...keys to the kingdom [Mt. 16:18]. Peter affirms the sole authority of Jesus (Jn. 6:68-9); & Jesus entrusts his mother to the Beloved Disciple as the relational coin of [church] authority." [P. Anderson, *John, Jesus, & History*, V. 4, p. 12]

F. Two Church Models; Two "Currencies"

•John poses a familial & egalitarian model against the emerging institutional & hierarchical one" - Paul Anderson

•"In contrast to institutionalizing developments in the third Christian generation, the Johannine tradition challenges [Diotrophes'] innovations [with an] ... approach to organization and governance, rooted in the... familial and egalitarian approaches of [Jesus]." [Paul N. Anderson, "Community... R.

Brown Left Behind...,” George Fox School of Theology, #275 (2013) p.]

•The entrust[ing] of the ‘keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens’ to Peter [Matt. 16:18ff] is the archetype of an institutional model of church government, while the entrust[ing] of the mother of Jesus to the Beloved Disciple [Jn. 19:26-27] is the archetype of a familial model. In other words, the ‘[kingdom] currency’ of the institutional model is power within hierarchy, while within the familial model it is love within an egalitarian community.” [Paul N. Anderson, Christology of the 4th Gospel, p. 239] [Economic maxim: ‘Bad currency drives out the good’]

G.What Became of the Johannine Community?

•“By the time 3 John appeared, the...Johannine circle... [was] threatened from an organizational... point of view. Diotrephes was ‘putting himself first’ & excluding orthodox members from the church, & the [Elder’s] concern that the influence of such leaders should not increase suggests that he feared the final dissolution of the Johannine community... [Ultimately, John’s] orthodox adherents ...became absorbed into...the Great Church.” [Stephen S. Smalley, “John the Apostle,” BM. Metzger (ed.) Oxford Guide to People & Places of the Bible, p. 156]

•Some scholars “speculate that the Johannine community was absorbed into Ignatius’ church. He [Ignatius of Antioch (Syria) d. 108/140 AD] was unflagging in his acceptance of the Gospel of John & was cited often against the Gospel’s detractors...” [John P. Keenan, Earthing the Cosmic Christ of Ephesians, p. #441]

•“The Johannine community disappeared leaving no records or heritage [beyond John’s writings].” – CC. Kroeger

•Ultimately, the Johannine community “(somewhat reluctantly) became absorbed into the mainstream Apostolic Church.” [David A. Lamb, Text, Context & the Johannine Community, p. 45]

•“It was not the [Elder] ...but an emerging Johannine church leader like Diotrephes who was responsible for leading the Johannine remnant into the Great Church.” [James Dunn, Op. cit., p. 782 #115]

VII.How to Sustain a ‘Johannine Church’

•Retain a ‘shared ministry’ by pastors/teachers; avoid a ‘one-man-ministry;’ don’t seek a ‘celebrity pastor’

•Recall: Without the Spirit we are not the church. “You all have the anointing’ (1 Jn. 2:20, 27)

•Remain (abide) in the teaching ‘you’ve heard from the beginning’ (1 Jn. 2:24, etc. John’s Gospel, Letters, etc.)

•Keep Jesus’ commands: “this is his command: [1.] that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and [2.] love one another...” (1 Jn. 3:23)

•Practical love “If anyone has this world’s goods & sees a fellow believer in need but withholds compassion from him—how does God’s love reside in him?” (1 Jn. 3:17) Be like “generous Gaius” (3 Jn. 1:5-6)

•Participate – in a ‘Johannine church’

•Connect with other bros. & sisters – e.g. [a.] in a community group &/or [b.] a serving team

•Cultivate your relationship with the Lord (1 Jn. 1:7-10)

•Pursue the truth “...all of you know the truth.” (2:20b) “young people...you are strong, & God’s word remains in you” (1 Jn. 2:14) “the truth that remains in us & will be with us forever.” (2 Jn. 2:1)

•Live the truth you have; walk the talk “I’m very glad to find ...your children walking in truth” (2 Jn. 1:4) “I’ve no greater joy than...to hear that my children are walking in truth.” (3 Jn. 1:4)