

Who was Gaius in the Bible?

Several men in the New Testament share the name Gaius, a common name in the first century. All of these men were involved in the ministry of the apostles in one way or another.

Gaius of Corinth. Paul baptized a man named Gaius in Corinth—one of only two he baptized there (1 Corinthians 1:14). Later, toward the end of his third missionary journey, when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, he was staying in Gaius's home, and Gaius included his greetings to the church in Rome (Romans 16:23).

Gaius of Macedonia. One of Paul's traveling companions during his third missionary journey was named Gaius. Luke identifies him as a Macedonian in Acts 19:29—Macedonia being a region in modern-day Greece. When a riot broke out in Ephesus, Gaius was one of the men seized by Demetrius and the other silversmiths. The mob dragged Gaius to the Ephesian theater and would likely have done him violence, but for the intervention of the city clerk (Acts 19:35-41).

Gaius of Derbe. Another of Paul's traveling companions on his third missionary journey was also named Gaius. Luke calls him "Gaius of Derbe" in Acts 20:4—Derbe being a city in Galatia in Asia Minor—to distinguish him from the Gaius mentioned in Acts 19. It seems this Gaius joined Paul's group in Greece and stayed with him through his incursion into Asia (modern-day Turkey), sailing ahead of Paul, Silas, and Luke and waiting for them in Troas (Acts 20:5).

Gaius, John's friend. The Epistle of 3 John is addressed to a man named Gaius who was a member of an unnamed church that John had the oversight of (3 John 1:1). John calls this

man a “dear friend” (verses 1, 2, and 11). Gaius is commended for his hospitality to traveling preachers of the gospel (verses 5, 6 and 8); for his faithfulness (verse 5); for his love (verse 6); and for his walking in the truth (verse 3). According to tradition this Gaius may be the one whom John appointed as bishop of Pergamum.

Two of the Gaiuses mentioned in the Bible were known for their hospitality, and that is probably why John Bunyan, needing a name for his innkeeper in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, chose the name “Gaius.” Gaius’s name means “happy” or “one who rejoices,” and the men who bore that name in Scripture seem to have known the joy that comes from serving the Lord.