

FIRST JOHN

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. Written by Inspired Apostle John; probably between A.D. 90-95.
 - B. THE CHRISTIAN to whom John wrote were beset with problems of:
 - 1. Lack of brotherly love.
 - 2. Spiritual laxity.
 - 3. Internal dissension.
 - 4. Lessening of steadfastness in fellowship.
 - 5. Seduction of worldliness.
 - 6. And Gnosticism (we might well call it today modernism)
 - C. Under such condition the presence of false teachers created powerful danger.
 - D. They are called (a) Liars; (b) seducers, (c) false prophets (d) deceivers and (e) antichrists.
 - E. PURPOSE:
 - 1. That their joy may be full (I John 1:4)
 - 2. That they may not sin (I John 2:1)
 - 3. That they may be warned against error (I John 2:26).
 - 4. That they may know they have eternal life (I John 5:13).
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FALSE VIEW OF CHRIST

- A. **GNOSTICISM:** “Knowledge falsely so called” Irenaeus Against Heresies.
 - 1. Its fundamental doctrine was that salvation is to be obtained through knowledge rather than through faith and obedience to the gospel of Christ.
- B. BRIEF SUMMARY OF GNOSTICISM:
 - 1. **First:** Dualistic, setting an infinite chasm between the spiritual world and the world of matter.
 - 2. **Second:** thus refused to attribute the origin of world to the ultimate God. Creator of world an inferior deity or demiurge.
 - 3. **Third:** believe that there is a spiritual element in man, or at any rate in the elite of mankind, which yearns to be freed from matter and ascend to its home.
 - 4. **Fourth:** mediators descending down the successive aeons to help achieve this.
 - 5. **Five:** redemption is brought about by knowledge, and it is the function of the divine mediators to open the eyes of “pneumatic”.
- C. GNOSTICISM AS MODERNISM today moves away from authority of God.
- D. The false teaching with which John deals appear to take Docetic and specifically Cernithian.

FIRST JOHN

Page 2

1. All matter is evil - thus denied the humanity of Christ - by teaching that he only seemed to have a body.
 2. John begins to deal with this in first 3 verses. Hear, Seen, Handled.
 - E. READ, page 302 (Living Lesson of N.T.) "Cerinthus.....
 1. 1:7 "his Son" contradicts teaching of Cerinthus.
 2. 2:22 - "He is a liar..."
 3. 4:2,3; Christ did not descend into already existing man..but came in flesh.
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FALSE VIEW OF SIN

- A. IF MATTER IS EVIL, as the Gnostic claimed, and thus of no positive value what effect does it have on ones moral conduct.
 - B. TWO POSSIBLE VIEWS:
 1. **License** Since the spirit and not the body is important, one could be morally free to indulge in all one's desires.
 2. **Asceticism:** Since the body is so inferior, one could say that it was to be denied and was to be brought to subjection by asceticism.
 - C. JOHN'S ANSWER:
 1. 3:7,8; Sin is not an indifferent matter.
 2. 3:4; 5:17; 3:9,10 etc.
 - D. THE TWO MARKS which characterize genuine Christianity are love of the brethren and obedience to the revealed commandments of God.
 1. John says that knowledge of God and obedience to God must ever go hand in hand.
 2. 2:3-5;....if we keep his commandments
 3. 5:2...love God and do his commandments.
 4. 3:10-18 doeth righteousness.
 - E. Karl Menninger has written a book entitled WHATEVER BECAME OF SIN, he points out that the word "sins" seems to have disappeared as a strong, ominous, and serious word. Sin today is called a little mistake, a weakness, a hang-up, a nervous condition, maladjustment, a hereditary trait, a problem, and psychological jitter. Instead of saying that one is a Homosexual sinner, we say the person is "gay" or "funny." Instead of saying a drunk sinner we say "intoxicated, inebriated, and stoned.
 - F. Instead of referring to a brother as covetous we say he is "thrifty. We need to realize that these things are "sin."
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FIRST JOHN

Page 3

PROPITIATION FOR SINS

- A. The Book of First John present Jesus Christ as:
1. He who was from the beginning (:1; 2;14).
 2. The Son of God (4;15; 5;5).
 3. The Christ (2:22; 5:1).
 4. The one who came in the flesh (4:2,3; 1;1,3).
 5. He who was without sin (3:5).
 6. The Savior of the world (4:14).
 7. Our “Advocate (parakletos) someone who is called in to help (2:1)
 8. The Propitiation” for our sins (2:2; 4;10).
- B. SIN BREAKS THE RELATIONSHIP that should exist between man and God.
1. A propitiatory sacrifice restores that relationship.
 2. The death of Christ has a prominent place in N.T.
- C. **FALSE VIEWS:**
1. THE Accident Theory, Sees no significance in the death of Christ. He was a man and as such subject to death.
 2. The Example Theory: This holds that he was killed because he was faithful to his principles We are to learn fidelity to truth, duty from Him.
 3. THE MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY. That Christ’s death is the mere natural consequence of his taking human nature upon himself, and that he merely suffered in and with the sins of his creatures.
- D. TRUTHS ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST (Isa. 53:10).
1. **IT IS VICARIOUS:** Suffering endured by one person in the stead of another. I.e., in his place.
 2. **It is satisfaction.** Since God is Holy and Just He should have some satisfaction to remove the outrage of sin. The death of Christ was necessary to supply this satisfaction.
 3. **It is a Ransom.** The death of Christ is presented in the N.T. as a price or ransom. “Ransom” is that of payment of a price in order to set another held in bondage free.
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FIRST JOHN

Page 4

False View Of Fellowship

- A. The view is held in some circles today that as long as one believes in the deity of Christ he should be fellowshiped regardless of his other doctrines
- B. Such a Position is not in harmony with the N.T.

C. In order for people to be united in fellowship they must:

1. Continue in the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42).
2. Continue to walk in the light (I John 1:5-7)
3. Abide in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9).
4. Follow the words of faith and good doctrine (II Tim. 3;10; 1:10).
5. Keep the commandments (I John 2;3-5).

Irenaeus, a pupil of Polycarp, who was himself a student of John, relates that Polycarp told him that the apostle, "the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath house without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly, lest even the bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus the enemy of the truth, is within." (Against Heresies, 3,3,4).

GOD IS LOVE

- A. If the typical Jew had written one sentence which most described God to him he likely would have said, "**God Is Law**".
 - B. John living under the Roman government, which believed that Might makes Right, who therefore might have defined "**God as Power**".
 - C. But John rose to the highest heights when he defined **God is Love**.
 1. John presents *love* as the soul and spirit of God in human experience.
 2. Almost from the first verse, John begins talking about love, and chapter five closes with a dramatic presentation ...God is Love.
 3. "*Little children, let us love one another, for love is of God. Every one that loves is begotten of God and knows God. He that does not love does not know God, for God is love.*"
 4. "*Herein is the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*"If God so loved us we ought also to love one another."
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