

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

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Lesson Number One

INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS TO THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

I There are three major purposes of John.

- A. To produce faith and love - 1 John 3:1; 5:13
- B. To deal with false teachers - 1 John 4:1; II; III
- C. To correct false doctrines - 1 John 1:1-4

II There are seven major contrasts noted in 1 John:

- A. Light versus darkness 1:5-2:11
- B. The Father versus the world 2:12-17
- C. Christ versus the antichrist 2:18-28
- D. Good works versus evil works 2:29-3:10
- E. The Spirit of truth versus the spirit of error 4:1-6
- F. True love versus false love 4:7-21
- G. Begotten versus unbegotten 5:1-21.

III There are seven tests of integrity for a Christian.

- A. 1:6 *if - we have fellowship and walk in darkness*
 1 Integrity

1 John 1:8-10
no sin
will

B. 1:8 *Forgive - cleanse*

C. 1:10 *Sins of the Past*

D. 2:4 ~~*if*~~

E. 2:6 *ought*

F. 2:9 *Darkness*

G. 4:20

IV There are five categories of false teachers.

A. Destructive - 1 John 2:26; 3:7

B. Seceding - 1 John 2:19

C. Worldly - 1 John 4:5

D. Proud, self-righteous, arrogant - 1 John 1:5-6

E. Traveling - 1 John 4:1-2

V There are four false philosophies.

A. Judaizers

B. Docetae

C. Gnostics

D. Nicolaitans

VI Four major problems faced Christians at John's time.

A. Accurate doctrine - 1,2,4,5,II,III

B. Identity - 1,2,3,4,5,II,III

C. Brotherly love - 2,3,4,5,II,III

D. Godly life - 1,2,3,4,5,II,III

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Lesson Number Two

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER

I Introduction

- A. The world is antagonistic to Christ.
- B. Belief in the Son of God brings eternal life and antagonism with the world.
- C. Fellowship with the Father is essential to eternal life.
- D. Great issues are involved: faith, love, obedience (walking), false teachings.

II Fellowship with the Father is **merited** by the incarnation - 1:1-4.

- A. Jesus was true man - Heb. 2:14-18; John 1:14; 19:24; Phil. 2:5-6.
- B. Jesus was true God - John 1:1-2, 14; Col. 1:15-17; Phil. 2:5-6; Heb. 1:10.
- C. Incarnation furnishes the only consistent merit for justification - Rom. 3:26.

III Fellowship with the Father **brings dual fellowship**.

- A. There is fellowship with deity - 1:3, 6, 2:1, 5-6.
 - 1. This makes us children of light - John 12:35-36; Rom. 13:12-14; Eph. 5:7-14.
 - 2. Thus, such relationship demands a change in one's life.
- B. There is fellowship with other brethren - 1:7; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12-27.
 - 1. The spiritual body of Christ is his temple - 1 Cor. 3:16.
 - 2. One must protect the sanctity of this temple - 1 Cor. 3:17.

IV Fellowship with the Father is **accomplished by the new birth.**

- A. The new birth was promised by Jesus - John 3:1-5.
- B. The new birth was practised by persons in the first century - 1 Pet. 1:23.
- C. Thus John uses the designation of "children" - 2:1, 12, 18, 28; 3:1; 5:1.

V This fellowship entails **things Christians must do.**

- A. 1:5-7 *walk in the light*
- B. 1:8-10 *Confess*
- C. 2:1-2 *Trust in Advocate*
- D. 2:3-6 *Walk in Obedience*
- E. 2:7-11 *Love the Brethren*

VI This fellowship entails **avoiding some things.**

- A. 2:12-17 - *Love not the World*
- B. 2:18-23 *Anti Christ*

C. 2:24-29 *Forgetting the promise*

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Lesson Number Three

ANTICHRIST AND ANOINTING

I John describes minutely the "antichrist" or "antichrists" - 2:18-22.

- A. He presently comes - 18. *in John's Day*
- B. There are many antichrists - 18.
- C. They were formerly Christians - 19. *went out from us.*
- D. They are liars - 22.
- E. They deny Jesus is the Christ, refuse to confess him - 22; 4:3. *a truth to which they had been exposed*
- F. They deny Jesus is the Son of God - 22.
- G. They go forth and spread the denial - 2 John 7.
- H. They deny God in the flesh, the incarnation - 2 John 7.
- I. They are deliberate deceivers - 2 John 7.

II Paul describes someone different as the "man of sin" - 2 Thess. 2.

- A. He is the result of a falling away - 3.
- B. He will be revealed as the man of sin - 3.
- C. He opposes God, all that is called God - 4.
- D. He exalts himself above God and all that is worshipped - 4.
- E. He sits in the temple of God setting himself forth as God - 4.

- F. He is lawless - 8.
- G. His coming is according to the working of Satan - 9.
- H. He uses powers, signs, and wonders - 10.
- I. He is similar to pseudo-christs - Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22.

III Concluding the "antichrist" is the papal system has several problems.

- A. The antichrists were already present in John's day.
- B. Gnosticism and Docetism did not lead to the papal system.
- C. Catholics have never denied beliefs in God.
- D. Catholics have never denied beliefs in the Son of God.
- E. Catholics have never denied Jesus is the Christ.
- F. Catholics have never denied the incarnation.
- G. Catholics have never denied obedience to God.

NOTE: Would it not then be unwise to demand dogmatically that the "man of sin" (usually connected with the papal system) be the same as the "antichrist"?

IV The anointing is a puzzle to many - 2:20, 27.

- A. There are usually four basic proposals as to its meaning:
 1. The miraculous gifts as practiced in the first century.
 2. The revealing of truth as is now contained in the Bible.
 3. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit which comes to baptized persons - Acts 2:38.

4. An illumination coming to Christians to help them understand the Bible.

B. One of these can be eliminated quickly, the idea of illumination.

1. Eph. 3:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17 demand ordinary persons can read and understand.

2. If there is infallible illumination, why is there so much diversity of belief?

C. One must remember God used anointing in the Old Testament.

1. Priests were anointed - Ex. 29:7.

2. Kings were anointed - 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13; 1 Kings 1:39.

3. The coming Messiah was to be the anointed one - Isa. 61:1.

D. Christians are anointed as priests - 2 Cor. 1:21-22.

1. There is the priesthood of all believers - 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.

2. Christians can "draw near", i.e., enter the "holy place" by the new and living way - Heb. 10:19-25.

3. This anointing is mentioned in connection with the giving of the Holy Spirit as a seal and an earnest payment.

4. This fits with the idea that such gift of the Holy Spirit is the anointing which qualifies one as a priest as well as acting as the seal and earnest.

5. The also fits with the idea of the Christian's body being the temple of the Holy Spirit, and such as can glorify God in its fleshly actions - 1 Cor. 6:12-20.

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Lesson Number Six

SURPRISING SERVANTS IN II & III JOHN

I The "Elect Lady" -- "Cyria"

- A. The book is addressed to the "elect lady and her children" - 2 John 1.
- B. Most commentators lean toward this being a person, not a church.
 - 1. A figurative use does not fit well.
 - 2. If the lady is the church, whom would the children be?
 - 3. Whom would the children of her sister be - v. 13?
 - 4. John not given to use of such figurative language.
 - 5. For it to continue throughout an entire book is doubtful.
- C. Cyria (see footnote in ASV) was an unusual lady, very hospitable.
- D. She was generous to gospel teachers even for those days of giving food, clothing, shelter, and money to continue on their journey.
- E. John cautions her about being so hospitable, being sure to check their accuracy of doctrine.
- F. She could be implicated in their guilt - v. 11.

II The soul-prospering Gaius

A. III John is addressed to a man named Gaius.

1. There was Gaius of Macedonia - Acts 19:29.
2. There was Gaius of Derbe who helped carry the money - Acts 20:4.
3. There was Gaius in Corinth whom Paul baptized - 1 Cor. 1:14.

B. Since this was over 30 years later, it is unlikely to be one of these.

C. This man shows how rich a Christian may become!

1. His soul was prospering v. 2.
2. John prayed his financial prosperity and his health would likewise prosper.
3. Usually today it is backwards as one hears "I wish brother _____ was as diligent and faithful in being a Christian as he is to his business affairs."
4. If a man's soul prospers first and foremost, then financial prosperity will not outstrip it.

D. This man walked in truth v. 4.

E. This man was a great encourager and helper of teachers sent from John - vv. 5-8.

F. Since an opposer is mentioned immediately in the context, it may be inferred that

Gaius was the opposite spirit from Diotrephes.

III The disturber Diotrephes

A. He loved to be first, preeminent - v. 9.

B. He would not receive even the apostle John - v. 9.

- C. He prated against John with wicked words - v. 10.
- D. He refused to receive the teachers sent from John - v. 10.
- E. He refused to fellowship any brethren who did receive the teachers - v. 10.
- F. He "casteth them out of the church," obviously unsuccessfully as Gaius and Demetrius were still there.

IV The well-witnessed Demetrius

- A. He had the witness of all men with whom he worked - 12.
- B. The truth would also witness for him as he lived within it.
- C. John was willing to give witness to his faithfulness.
- D. It is thought he delivered this letter from John.