

STUDIES
IN
FIRST JOHN
SECOND JOHN
THIRD JOHN
JUDE

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1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the members of the committee who have been appointed to study the problem of the shortage of housing in the city of New York.

1 John 1:1

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

1 John 1:2

The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

1 John 1:3

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:4

We write this to make our joy complete.

1 John 1:5

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:6

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 1:8

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:10

If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1 John 2:1

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

1 John 2:2

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:3

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

1 John 2:4

The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 2:5

But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:

1 John 2:6

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

1 John 2:7

Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard.

1 John 2:8

Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

1 John 2:9

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.

1 John 2:10

Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.

1 John 2:11

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

1 John 2:12

I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

1 John 2:13

I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.

1 John 2:14

I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

1 John 2:15

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 2:16

For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.

1 John 2:17

The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 2:18

Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

1 John 2:19

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

1 John 2:20

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.

1 John 2:21

I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.

1 John 2:22

Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 2:23

No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

1 John 2:24

See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

1 John 2:25

And this is what he promised us--even eternal life.

1 John 2:26

I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray.

1 John 2:27

As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him.

1 John 2:28

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

1 John 2:29

If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

1 John 3:1

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 3:2

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:3

Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

1 John 3:4

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

1 John 3:5

But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.

1 John 3:6

No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

1 John 3:7

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

1 John 3:8

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

1 John 3:9

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

1 John 3:10

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

1 John 3:11

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

1 John 3:12

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

1 John 3:13

Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.

1 John 3:14

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

1 John 3:15

Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

1 John 3:16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

1 John 3:17

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

1 John 3:18

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

1 John 3:19

This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence

1 John 3:20

whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

1 John 3:21

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God

1 John 3:22

and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

1 John 3:23

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

1 John 3:24

Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

1 John 4:1

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:2

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

1 John 4:3

but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

1 John 4:4

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

1 John 4:5

They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.

1 John 4:6

We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

1 John 4:7

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:8

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:9

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:10

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:11

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:12

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 John 4:13

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

1 John 4:14

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

1 John 4:15

If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

1 John 4:16

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

1 John 4:17

In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:19

We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:20

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

1 John 4:21

And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 5:1

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.

1 John 5:2

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

1 John 5:3

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

1 John 5:4

for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

1 John 5:5

Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

1 John 5:6

This is the one who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

1 John 5:7

For there are three that testify:

1 John 5:8

the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

1 John 5:9

We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.

1 John 5:10

Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.

1 John 5:11

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

1 John 5:12

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 John 5:13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 5:14

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

1 John 5:15

And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.

1 John 5:16

If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.

1 John 5:17

All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

1 John 5:18

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

1 John 5:19

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

1 John 5:20

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true--even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:21

Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

2 John 1:1

The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth--and not I only, but also all who know the truth--

2 John 1:2

because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever:

2 John 1:3

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

2 John 1:4

It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us.

2 John 1:5

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.

2 John 1:6

And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

2 John 1:7

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

2 John 1:8

Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

2 John 1:9

Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

2 John 1:10

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him.

2 John 1:11

Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

2 John 1:12

I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

2 John 1:13

The children of your chosen sister send their greetings.

3 John 1:11

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

3 John 1:12

Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone--and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

3 John 1:13

I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink.

THE MESSAGE OF JOHN, APOSTLE OF LOVE

TEXT: I John 2:18,19

INTRODUCTION:

1. Written to reassure and encourage Christians experiencing division, or turmoil. (Cf. 2:18,19)
2. Abounds with admonitions to show the Love of Jesus toward one another.
3. The letter deals with some important questions about our attitude in the fellowship of the congregation.

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE THREE VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ABOUT LOVE... John 13 ^{34,35}

I. WHY DON'T WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER? (OR, WHAT KEEPS US FROM LOVING?)

1. Walking in Darkness (1:6; 2:9-11)

- (1) Love in the fellowship is hampered by sin and unrepentant attitudes in the body.
- (2) We can become so preoccupied with sin that it clutters our lives, and we cannot have the best interests of others at heart.
- (3) Sin is selfishness - and it is difficult for you to care about others when you are only interested in you!

2. Loving the World (2:15,16; 5:21)

- (1) Often we care about things more than we care for, or about, people.
- (2) We are most comfortable with things - they don't complain, or cry.
- (3) And we can control things - when we can't control people.
- (4) But if our idols - objects of worship - are lower than God, we will be debased ourselves and have a wrong view of others.

3. We Have Seen Our Brother (4:20)

I Jn 3 ^{10,14,16,23} many have not kept this commandment

- (1) It is sometimes easier to love someone with whom we have little direct contact.
- (2) We can love God because He is perfect, loving and good; but then, there is us.
- (3) You probably know people whom you care about, but see very seldom - but what about your mate, or best friend in the congregation? YOU KNOW THEIR SINS!

4. Fear (4:17,18)

- (1) Fear of what? Fear to love - to let others' interest be more important to you than your own

- (2) Fear of being vulnerable - of being taken for granted - of being hurt - that you will not like me - that I have darkness in my life.

II. WHY SHOULD WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER?

1. He first loved us (4:9,11,19)

- (1) It is natural to take an interest in people who take an interest in you.
- (2) We are moved to be more compassionate, helpful and interested in others when they show love and compassion.

2. It is a proof of Sonship (3:10,14; 4:7,16; 5:1)

- (1) Cf. John 13:35 - "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
- (2) Is your heart a heart born of God? Do you have the characteristics of the Father?
- (3) This is our new nature, and it is appropriate it show itself among those who share with us the new nature and the new heart.

3. Forgiveness is Known (1:7; 2:12; 3:19,20)

- (1) Freed from the burden of guilt, we can relate to others in the joy of our forgiveness and salvation.
- (2) Our energies are not wasted in frustration, worry, guilt and fear, but in loving and serving others!

4. It is A Command (3:23,4:21)

- (1) This is really a test of discipleship - "Why call me Lord, and do not what I say?"
- (2) He is our Lord, He has commanded it, and the only thing that would keep us from doing it, would be sin in our life?

III. HOW DO WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER? (Some general thoughts)

- 1. Be Distinct From the World (1:7; 3:1-3; 5:35) - The unity we share in our new life, and in our new mission leads us to show our concern for one another.
- 2. Provide for the needs of others (3:16,17) - food, place to stay, sympathetic ear, cup of water, etc.
- 3. Show concern for Spiritual Growth (5:16,17) - pray for, genuinely concerned.
- 4. Love God, and Obey His Commands (5:2) - lead a life in keeping with His will - keep yourself free from sin, and not hurt others by sinning.

*We like
"become of"
we love
"in spite of"*

John 3:18

CONCLUSION:

1. When we work for what is best and most important in life, our brothers and sisters will benefit from our life, harmony will prevail and the Lord's Kingdom will be spread throughout the community.
2. THAT IS LOVE!

FIRST JOHN
THE EPISTLE OF 'NO COMPROMISE'

AUTHOR: John, the apostle (asserted by Polycarp, Iraeneus, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian and other early church "fathers.")

An eye-witness of what he wrote.
Son of Zebedee, and brother of James.
One of the innermost circle of Jesus' friends.
The disciple whom Jesus loved (John 19:26).
Shows a strong relationship between the readers and writer.

ADDRESSEES: Christians, probably in Asia Minor

DATE: A.D. 85-95

FROM: Probably Ephesus

REASON: False teachers were spreading heresy by denying the incarnation of Christ.

John furnished a criterion for testing the Christian life, i.e., righteousness or righteous living; love for other believers; doctrine (belief in Jesus as the Incarnate Christ).

First John was also written to strengthen knowledge, joy and assurance in the Christian faith versus that of false teachings.

Cf. 1 John 5:3

Written so that their joy may be full (1:4); that they may not sin (2:1); that they may be warned against error (2:26); and that they may know they have eternal life (5:13).

THEME: John sets forth the *humanity* of Jesus as well as the *divinity* of Jesus.

He is eternal (1:1; 2:14)
His blood cleanses from sin (1:7)
He is the Messiah (2:22; 5:1)
He is the Propitiation for sins (2:2; 4:10)
He is our Advocate (2:1)
He is without sin (3:5)
He is Indwelling (3:24; 4:13)
He came in the flesh (4:2,3; 1:1-3; 5:6; 3:16)
He is the Son of God (4:15; 5:5)
He is the Savior (4:9,14; 5:11,12)

CHARACTERISTICS: Primarily didactic; no proper names are used; no geographical or historical references; deals with error from the standpoint of personal experience based on a personal relationship to and fellowship with God, rather from that of a theoretical polemicist; John's pen is like that of a surgeon's knife; spiritual simplicity (no gray areas).

STYLE: Frustrating to our Western mind
Fond of aphorisms (short, pithy statements that state a general doctrine of truth)
Fond of repetitions - states certain fundamental truths over and over
Enlarges and applies, then repeats in condensed simplicity
The thought process is in a circular pattern, or spiral shape
He draws attention to a central thought which is repeated, coming back to it again and again, both negatively and positively
Dwells more on the general rather than the particular; more on the "inner" than on the "outer."
Speaks of Christian truths as living realities
Simple statements reveal profound truths relevant to our century
Written in Hebrew form rather than Greek in form, i.e., he uses parallel clauses. the thoughts do not move onward in a straight line by successive logical steps.
Constructed like a piece of music, rather than a brief for a debate
Contains no introduction; no greeting; no concluding statement
Resembles a sermon more than a letter
Reveals the writer as an affectionate, but severe, person

KEY WORD: "Know" (40X)

BRIEF OUTLINE:

CERTAINTY THROUGH--

I. Introduction (1:1-4)

II. "WALKING IN THE LIGHT" (1:5-2:29)

1. Personal Spiritual Conduct (1:5-2:6)
2. Social Relationships (2:7-11)
3. Separation From the World (2:12-17)
4. Adherence to the Truth (2:18-29)

III. "ABIDING IN LOVE" (3:1-4:21)

1. Ethical Proof (3:1-12)
2. Social Proof (3:13-24)
3. Theological Proof (4:1-6)
4. Emotional Proof (4:7-21)

IV. "EXERCISE OF FAITH" (5:1-12)

V. "CERTAINTIES OF LIFE" (5:13-21)

THE Gnostic DOCTRINE

Gnostics claimed to have a particular knowledge of the mysteries of the unseen world. Matter was viewed as intrinsically evil, of which God could not be the Author. Only the Spirit is good. Through man's superior knowledge he can find God.

I. DENY THE INCARNATION.

1. God being good could have nothing to do with matter which is evil.
2. Therefore, Jesus could not have suffered, and died, to save us.

II. JESUS.

1. Jesus only seemed to have a physical body (doceticism).
2. Divinity descended at His baptism, and withdrew before His death.
3. Only the human Jesus suffered, died and rose again.

III. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

1. Since the body is evil, it makes no difference how a person lives.
2. One could claim to know God while living a life of indulgence.

IV. KNOWLEDGE

1. Man could know God only through long study and elaborate study and training in secret knowledge.
2. This led to a spiritual aristocracy which destroyed Christian fellowship.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM FIRST JOHN

1. The importance of the blood of Christ - Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 1:5.
2. True and eternal life consists in fellowship with God.
3. Fellowship is possible only through faith and obedience in Christ.
4. Faith in Christ is not a matter of credulity or mysticism or superstition. Faith is belief founded in God's word.
5. "Heard at a distance, saw what was nearer, beheld what was closer and their hands handled the Lord in their midst." For such to follow Him, Christ becomes ever more real as they find in Him eternal life and fellowship with God.
6. No other communion is so intimate, and no other companionship so inspiring as those which are based on faith in the Christ.
7. The deepest source of joy is found in service.
8. If we are to have fellowship with God, it is evident we must walk in the light.
9. The proof of being a Christian is found in the life he leads.
10. One who refuses to accept light revealed, and who is unwilling to obey that light, cannot have fellowship with God.
11. Walking in darkness does not mean necessarily to live in vice or immorality, but includes the pursuing of daily tasks with reference to the will of God. It ("walking in darkness") means also to live by worldly standards, to seek selfish goals, to exclude Christ.
12. Walking in the light includes not only the recognition of what is true, but the doing of what is right. Our knowledge is tested by obedience to the commands of God.
13. To love our brothers and sisters in the Lord is one of the great requirements of our faith.
14. Love is a major theme of the New Testament:
 - (1) Jesus makes it the test of discipleship - John 13:34,35
 - (2) Peter as a vital part of Christian graces - 2 Peter 1:7
 - (3) Paul as the greatest of all - 1 Corinthians 13.

Are You Asking?

1. Why do I often feel I just don't measure up to God's standards?
2. Why can't other Christians be more friendly? What is the cure for plastic fellowship?
3. Is it okay for a Christian to fail - or be just a little bit human once in a while?
4. How many times can I confess the same sins and be forgiven? Does God ever get tired of it?
5. God says, "Fear not," but I still worry a lot. What can I do?
6. I pray but I don't seem to get many answers - what wrong?
7. How can I love people I don't even like?
8. The Bible talks about walking in the light. What if my life has shadows and gray areas?
9. How does a Christian stay pure in such a dirty world?
10. What's the secret to real joy and happiness? I try to name it and claim it, but I can't seem to tame it.

FATHERLY INSTRUCTION TO LITTLE CHILDREN

To strengthen knowledge, joy and assurance in the Christian faith

versus

That of false teaching.

Shows the measure for testing the Christian life--

1. Righteousness - righteous living
2. Love - for others
3. Doctrine - belief in Jesus as the Incarnate Christ

Key thoughts--

Righteousness - fellowship (1:5-2:2); knowledge (2:3-6); condition (2:7-11)

Truth - opposition (2:18,19); appropriation (2:20-23); compensation (2:24-28)

Regeneration - privilege (2:29-3:2); character (3:3-10)

Love - love and life (3:11-24); basis (4:7-5:3)

Assurance - victory of faith (5:4-6); witness of the Holy Spirit (5:7-12); knowledge of divine favor (5:13-20)

THE MESSAGE OF JOHN, APOSTLE OF LOVE
1 JOHN 2:18,19

INTRODUCTION:

1. First John is written to reassure and encourage Christians experiencing division, or disorder. (1 John 2:18,19)
2. The letter abounds with admonitions to show the love of Christ toward each other.
3. It also deals with some important questions about our attitude in the fellowship of the congregation.

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE THE QUESTION--

I. "WHY DON'T WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER?" ("What keeps us from loving?")

1. *Walking in darkness* - 1:6; 2:9-11.

- (1) Love in the fellowship is hampered by sin and unrepentant attitudes in the body.
- (2) We can become so preoccupied with sin that it clutters our lives, and we cannot have the best interests of others at heart.
- (3) Self is selfishness, and it is difficult for us to care about others when we are only interested in us.

2. *Loving the world* - 2:15,16; 5:21.

- (1) Often we care about things more than we care for, or about people.
- (2) We are most comfortable with things - they don't control, complain or cry.
- (3) We can control things, while we can't control people.
- (4) But, if our idols (objects of worship) are lower than God, we will degrade ourselves and have a wrong view of other people.

3. *We have seen our brother* (4:20; 3:10,14,16,23).

- (1) It is sometimes easier to love someone with whom we have little direct contact.
- (2) We can love God because He is perfect, loving and good, but then, there is us.

- (3) You probably know people whom you care about, but see very seldom - but what about your mate, or best friend in the congregation? You know their sins!

4. ***Fear*** (4:17,18).

- (1) Fear of what? Fear to love, or to let others' interest be more important to you than your own?
- (2) Fear of being exposed; of being taken for granted; of being hurt; that you will not like me; that I have darkness in my life?

II. "WHY SHOULD WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER?"

1. ***He first loved us*** - 4:9,11,19.

- (1) It is natural to take an interest in people who take an interest in you.
- (2) We are moved to be more compassionate, helpful and interested in others when they show love and compassion.

2. ***It is proof of sonship*** - 3:10,14; 4:7,16; 5:1.

- (1) "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35)
- (2) Is your heart a heart born of God? Do you have the characteristics of the Father?
- (3) This is our new nature, and it is appropriate it show itself among those who share with us the new nature and the new heart.

3. ***Forgiveness is known*** - 1:7; 2:12; 3:19,20.

- (1) Freed from the burden of guilt, we can relate to others in the joy of our forgiveness and salvation.
- (2) Our energies are not wasted in frustration, worry, guilt and fear, but in loving and serving others!

4. ***It is a command*** - 3:23; 4:21.

- (1) This is really a test of discipleship - "Why call me Lord, and do not what I say?"
- (2) He is our Lord, He has commanded it, and the only thing that would keep us from doing it, would be sin in our life.

(3) We like “because of” - we love “inspite of.”

III. “HOW DO WE LOVE ANOTHER?” - Some general thoughts - 1 John 3:18.

1. ***Be distinct from the world*** - 1:7; 3:1-3; 5:3,5 - the unity we share in our new life, in our new mission leads us to show our concern for one another.
2. ***Provide for the needs of others*** - 3:16,17 - food, place to stay, sympathetic ear, cup of water, etc.
3. ***Show concern for spiritual growth*** - 5:16,17 - pray for, be genuinely concerned.
4. ***Love God, and obey His commands*** - 5:2 - lead a life in keeping with His will - keep yourself free from sin, and not hurt others by sinning.

CONCLUSION:

1. When we work for what is best and most important in life, our brothers and sisters will benefit from our life, harmony will prevail and the Lord’s kingdom will be spread throughout the community.
2. That is “love.”

OTHER WAYS TO SHOW “LOVE”

1. Be an example of and encouragement to faithfulness to the cause of Christ - 1 Corinthians 11:1.
2. Correct what is wrong - Galatians 6:1
3. Promote fellowship and good works - Hebrews 10:24; Galatians 6:10
4. Prevent strife and division - Galatians 5:15; 1 Corinthians 1:10
5. Do not be envious nor jealous - seek the welfare of the brethren - 1 Corinthians 1:3
6. Make no distinctions - Galatians 3:28
7. Show greatest degree of compassion - 1 John 3:17
8. Render most humble service - John 13; Philippians 2:4
9. Provide growth in and for the church -

“I lived for myself, I thought for myself,
For myself, and none beside-
Just as if Jesus had never lived,
As if he had never died.”

FINAL EXAM

JOHN 20:31; 1 JOHN 5:13

1. Do you believe in the Son?
2. What is your attitude toward sin? (1 John 1:8-10)
3. Are you an obedient servant? (1 John 2:3)
4. Are you separated from the world? (1 John 2:16)
5. Are you anticipating the coming of Christ? (1 John 3:1-3)
6. Do you love the brethren? (1 John 3:14)
7. Do you practice sin? (1 John 5:18)

WE KNOW HIM IF WE--

1. Keep His commandments (2:3)
2. Walk as He walked (2:5,6)
3. Know the truth (Jesus is the Son of God - 2:20,21)
4. Do righteousness (2:29)
5. Abide in Him (3:5,6)
6. Love the brethren - compassion (3:14)
7. Have a heart that does not condemn us (3:19,20)
8. Have His spirit (3:24)
9. Confess Jesus has come in the flesh (4:2)
10. Know God (if we love) - 4:7,8
11. Love God and do His command (5:2)
12. Do not keep on sinning (5:18)
13. Are not of the world (5:19)

1-3 JOHN

Tradition tells us that after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70, the Apostle John and a core group of followers moved to Asia Minor. The apostle settled in Ephesus and soon influenced churches in several major cities. Sometime around A.D. 75-80 John wrote his Gospel, which circulated both as a missionary tract and as a report of the Son of God's life and teaching for believers. The Christian church was firmly established by now but, as we know from 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, and Jude, destructive heresies were introduced by false teachers. The letters of John, and particularly 1 John, were probably written around A.D. 85-90 as a response to this internal crisis. John's final work, Revelation, was written near the end of the first century.

These letters of John are warmly personal in character. John does combat heresy. But he does so in a pastoral way, by repeatedly emphasizing basic doctrines about Christ and the Christian lifestyle. Again and again we read that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh, that righteous conduct is essential in those who have been born of God, and that love is the mark of vital relationship with God. One story about John, reported in Jerome's commentary on Galatians, tells how he was carried into the congregation when he was old and unable to say anything except, "Little children, love one another." When asked why he always spoke these same words, John replied, "Because it is the Lord's command, and if this only is done, it is enough."

There may be no epistles in the New Testament that better remind us of the basic truths which Christians believe and which we are called to live.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM 1 JOHN

On believer's sins.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1:9).

On knowing God.

"The man who says, 'I know Him,' but does not do what He commands is a liar" (2:4).

On loving.

"Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness" (2:9).

On professed believers who abandon their faith.

"They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us they would have remained with us" (2:19).

On the impact of salvation.

"No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning" (3:9).

On the nature of love.

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (3:16).

On assurance of salvation.

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (5:1).
"This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life" (5:11-12).

Illustration. The Apostle John was one of the inner circle of three who stayed with Jesus even when the others were absent. John is known as the one for whom Jesus had a special affection and who was "reclining next to him" at the Last Supper (John 13:23). John earned his early nickname, Boanerges, "Son of Thunder," when he and his brother James urged Jesus to call down fire on a Samaritan village that refused them hospitality (Mark 3). What a transformation association with Jesus worked in John, as this Son of Thunder became the warm, caring, and compassionate apostle of love. As John's writings point out, an experience of the love of God in Jesus will move the believer to love Christian brothers and sisters. A growing love for others is one of the clearest marks of an authentic faith in Christ.

Authorship

The author of the three letters attributed to John does not identify himself at the beginning, as was common in first-century epistles. However, several things point clearly to the Apostle John. First, the author claims to be an eyewitness to Jesus' incarnation (1 John 1:2-3; 4:14). Second, Papias, in the mid-second century, specifically identifies John as the author, as do other church fathers. And numerous quotes or allusions to this letter in early Christian writings show it is a very early document. Third, these letters show many similarities in language, thought, and emphases to John's Gospel. Taken together the evidence for John's authorship is strong enough that one scholar speaks of the "obstinate perverseness" of those who argue for a different author.

Theological Outline of 1 John

- I. LIGHT 1-2
- II. LOVE 3-4
- III. FAITH 5

Note: First John is the most difficult of New Testament books to outline. Many argue that there is no outline, that John has no logical plan, but simply writes a very personal letter shifting themes as one thought leads him to another. Thus, two possible outlines are included below to show various ways in which this letter might be analyzed.

Outline Based on the Nature of God

Prologue (1:1-4)

I. God as Light (1:5-2:27)

A. Communion and Confession (1:5-2:2)

B. Communion and Obedience (2:3-17)

C. Warning: Antichrists (2:18-27)

II. God as Righteous (2:28-4:6)

A. Righteous Children (2:28-3:10)

B. Righteous Love (3:11-18)

C. Confidence before God (3:19-24)

D. Warning: The Spirit of Antichrist (4:1-6)

III. God as Love (4:7-5:12)

A. True Love (4:7-21)

B. Centrality of Faith in Christ (5:1-12)

Epilogue (5:13-21)

Outline Based on the Danger from False Teachers

Preface (1:1-4)

I. Basic Realities False Teachers Deny (1:5-2:2)

A. Sin Breaks Fellowship with God (1:5-7)

B. Sin Exists in Our Nature (1:8-9)

C. Sin Expresses Itself in Our Conduct (1:10-2:2)

II. Tests of Relationship: Their First Application (2:3-27)

A. Obedience, the Moral Test (2:3-6)

B. Love, the Social Test (2:7-11)

C. Digression on the Church and the World (2:12-17)

D. Belief, the Doctrinal Test (2:18-27)

III. Tests of Relationship: Second

Application (2:28-4:6)

A. More on the Moral Test: Righteousness (2:28-3:10)

B. More on the Social Test: Love (3:11-18)

C. Digression on Assurance (3:19-24)

D. More on the Doctrinal Test: Belief (4:1-6)

IV. Tests of Relationship: Third Application (4:7-5:5)

A. More on the Social Test: Love (4:7-12)

B. A Combination of Social and Doctrinal Tests (4:13-21)

C. A Combination of the Three Tests (5:1-5)

V. A Basis for Assurance (5:6-17)

A. Three Witnesses (5:6-12)

B. Assurance (5:13-17)

Conclusion (5:18-21)

Introductory Notes to 1 John

I. Author

The Spirit used the Apostle John to give us the Gospel of John, three epistles, and the Book of the Revelation. These three works complement each other and give to us a full picture of the Christian life.

The Gospel of John	The Epistles of John	The Revelation of John
Emphasis on salvation	Emphasis on sanctification	Emphasis on glorification
Past history	Present experience	Future hope
Christ died for us	Christ lives in us	Christ comes for us
The Word made flesh	The Word made real in us	The Word conquering

BE REAL—1 JOHN

Outline

Key theme: The tests of reality in the Christian life

Key verse: 1 John 5:13

I. INTRODUCTION—1:1-4

II. THE TESTS OF TRUE FELLOWSHIP: GOD IS LIGHT—1:5-2:29

A. Obedience—1:5-2:6

 (“saying” vs. “doing”)

B. Love—2:7-17

C. Truth—2:18-29

III. THE TESTS OF TRUE SONSHIP: GOD IS LOVE—chapters 3-5

A. Obedience—3

B. Love—4

C. Truth—5

Contents

1. It's Real! (1 John 1:1-4)
2. Walking and Talking (1 John 1:5-2:6)
3. Something Old, Something New (1 John 2:7-11)
4. The Love God Hates (1 John 2:12-17)
5. Truth or Consequences (1 John 2:18-29)
6. The Pretenders (1 John 3:1-10)
7. Love or Death (1 John 3:11-24)
8. Getting to the Bottom of Love (1 John 4:1-16)
9. Love, Honor, and Obey (1 John 4:17-5:5)
10. What Do You Know for Sure? (1 John 5:6-21)

1 JOHN

A Suggested Outline of 1 John

Introduction: The reality of Jesus Christ (1:1-4)

I. The Tests of Fellowship: God is Light (1:5-2:29)

A. The test of obedience (1:5-2:6)

B. The test of love (2:7-17)

C. The test of truth (2:18-29)

II. The Tests of Sonship: God Is Love (3-5)

A. The test of obedience (3:1-24)

B. The test of love (4:1-21)

C. The test of truth (5:1-21)

First John is built around the repetition of the three main themes: light vs. darkness, love vs. hatred, and truth vs. error. These three “strands” weave in and out of the letter, making it difficult to construct a simple outline. The above outline is based on the main lessons of each section, although the careful student will see that the three themes intermingle. In these days when many Christians think they have fellowship with God but do not, and when many religious people think they are true sons of God but are not, it is important that we apply these tests and examine our own lives carefully.

Chapter One

It's Real!

1 John 1:1-4

Once upon a time. . . .”

Remember how exciting those words used to be? They were the open door into an exciting world of make-believe, a dreamworld that helped you forget all the problems of childhood.

Then—*pow!* You turned a corner one day, and “Once upon a time” became kid stuff. You discovered that life is a battleground, not a playground, and fairy stories were no longer meaningful. You wanted something *real*.

The search for something real is not new. It has been going on since the beginning of history. Men have looked for reality and satisfaction in wealth, thrills, conquest, power, learning, and even in religion.

There is nothing really wrong with these experiences, except that *by themselves* they never really satisfy. *Wanting* something real and *finding* something real are two different things. Like a child eating cotton candy at the circus, many people who expect to bite into something real end up with a mouthful of nothing. They waste priceless years on empty substitutes for reality.

This is where the Apostle John’s first epistle comes in. Written centuries ago, this letter deals with a theme that is forever up-to-date: *the life that is real*.

John had discovered that satisfying reality is not to be found in things or thrills, but in a Person—Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Without wasting any time, he tells us about this “living reality” in the first paragraph of his letter.

As you read 1 John 1:1-4, you learn three vital facts about the life that is real.

THIS LIFE IS REVEALED (1 JOHN 1:1)

As you read John's letter, you will discover that he enjoys using certain words, and that the word "manifest" is one of them. "And the life was manifested" (1 John 1:2), he says. This life was not hidden so that we have to search for it and find it. No, it was *manifested*—revealed openly!

If you were God, how would *you* go about revealing yourself to men? How could you tell them about, and give them, the kind of life you wanted them to enjoy?

God has revealed Himself in creation (Rom. 1:20), but creation alone could never tell us the story of God's love. God has also revealed Himself much more fully in His Word, the Bible. But God's final and most complete revelation is in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Because Jesus is God's revelation of Himself, He has a very special name: "The Word of Life" (1 John 1:1).

This same title opens John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

Why does Jesus Christ have this name? Because Christ is to us what our words are to others. Our words reveal to others just what we think and how we feel. Christ reveals to us the mind and heart of God. He is the living means of communication between God and men. To know Jesus Christ is to know God!

John makes no mistake in his identification of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Son of the Father—the Son of God (1 John 1:3). John warns us several times in his letter not to listen to the false teachers who tell lies about Jesus Christ. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" (1 John 2:22) "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:2-3). If a man is wrong about Jesus Christ, he is wrong about God, because Jesus Christ is the final and complete revelation of God to men.

For example, there are those who tell us that Jesus was a man but was not God. John has no place for such teachers! One of the last things he writes in this letter is, "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is *the true God*, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

False teaching is so serious a matter that John wrote about it in his second letter too, warning believers not to invite false teachers into their homes (2 John 9-10). And he makes it plain that to deny that Jesus is God is to follow the lies of Antichrist (1 John 2:22-23).

This leads to a basic Bible doctrine that has puzzled many people—the doctrine of the Trinity.

John mentions in his letter the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For example, he says, "By this know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is

come in the flesh is of God” (1 John 4:2, SCO). Here are references in one verse to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And in 1 John 4:13-15 is another statement that mentions the three Persons of the Trinity.

The word “Trinity” is a combination of *tri-*, meaning “three,” and *unity*, meaning “one.” A “trinity,” then, is a three-in-one, or one-in-three. To be sure, the word “trinity” is not found in the Bible, but the truth is taught there (cf. also Matt. 28:19-20; John 14:16-17, 26; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6).

Christians do not believe that there are *three gods*. They believe that one God exists in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Nor do Christians believe merely that one God reveals Himself in three different ways, much as one man may be a husband, a father, and a son. No, the Bible teaches that God is *one* but that He exists in *three* Persons.

One teacher of doctrine used to say, “Try to explain the Trinity and you *may* lose your mind. But try to explain it away and you *will* lose your soul!” And the Apostle John says, “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father” (1 John 2:23, NASB). No Person of the Trinity is expendable!

As you read the Gospel records of the life of Jesus, you see the wonderful kind of life God wants us to enjoy. But it is not by *imitating* Jesus, our Example, that we may share in this life. No, there is a far better way.

THIS LIFE IS EXPERIENCED (1 JOHN 1:2)

Read the first four verses of John's letter again, and you will notice that the apostle had a *personal encounter with Jesus Christ*. His was no secondhand "religious experience" inherited from somebody else or discovered in a book! No, John knew Jesus Christ face-to-face. He and the other Apostles heard Jesus speak. They watched Him as He lived with them. In fact, they studied Him carefully, and even touched His body. They knew that Jesus was *real*—not a phantom, not a vision, but God in human corporeal form.

Some twentieth-century student may say: "Yes, and this means that John had an advantage. He lived when Jesus walked on earth. He knew Jesus personally. But I was born twenty centuries too late!"

But this is where our student is wrong! It was not the Apostles' *physical* nearness to Jesus Christ that made them what they were. It was their *spiritual* nearness. They had committed themselves to Him as their Saviour and their Lord. Jesus Christ was real and exciting to John and his colleagues because they had trusted Him. By trusting Christ, they had *experienced eternal life*!

Six times in this letter John uses the phrase "born of God." This was not an idea John had invented; he had heard Jesus use these words. "Except a man be born again," Jesus had said, "he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'Ye must be born again'" (John 3:3, 6-7). We can experience this "real life" only after we have believed the Gospel, put our trust in Christ, and been "born of God."

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). Eternal life is not something we earn by good works or deserve because of good character. Eternal life, the life that is real, is a gift from God to those who trust His Son as their Saviour.

John wrote his Gospel to tell people how to receive this wonderful life (John 20:31). He wrote his first letter to tell people how to be sure they have really been born of God (1 John 5:9-13).

A college student returned to the campus after going home for a family funeral, and almost at once his grades began to go down. His counselor thought that the death of his grandmother had affected the boy, and that time would heal the wound, but the grades only became worse. Finally the boy confessed the real problem. While he was home, he happened to look into his grandmother's old Bible, and there he discovered in the family record that he was an adopted son.

"I don't know who I belong to," he told his counselor. "I don't know where I came from!"

The assurance that we are in God's family—that we have been "born of God"—is vitally important to all of us. Certain characteristics are true of all God's children. A person who is born of God lives a righteous life (1 John 2:29). A child of God does not

practice sin (which is the meaning of the *King James* word “commit,” 1 John 3:9). A believer will occasionally *commit* sin (cf. 1 John 1:8-2:2), but he will not make it a habit to sin.

God’s children also love each other and their Heavenly Father (cf. 1 John 4:7; 5:1). They have no love for the world system around them (1 John 2:15-17), and because of this the world hates them (1 John 3:13). Instead of being overcome by the pressures of this world, and swept off balance, the children of God overcome the world (1 John 5:4). This is another mark of true children of God.

Why is it so important that we *know* that we have been born of God? John gives us the answer: if you are not a child of God, you a “child of wrath” (Eph. 2:1-3) and may become a “child of the devil” (1 John 3:10; and see Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). A “child of the devil” is a counterfeit Christian who acts “saved” but has not been born again. Jesus called the Pharisees “children of the devil” (John 8:44) and they were very religious.

A counterfeit Christian—and they are common—is something like a counterfeit ten-dollar bill.

Suppose you have a counterfeit bill and actually think it is genuine. You use it to pay for a tank of gas. The gas station manager uses the bill to buy supplies. The supplier uses the bill to pay the grocer. The grocer bundles the bill up with forty-nine other ten-dollar bills and takes it to the bank. And the teller says, “I’m sorry, but *this* bill is a counterfeit.”

That ten-dollar bill may have done a lot of good while it was in circulation, but when it arrived at the bank it was exposed for what it *really* was, and put out of circulation.

So with a counterfeit Christian. He may do many good things in this life, but when he faces the final judgment he will be rejected. “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out demons? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?’ And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity!’” (Matt. 7:22-23, SCO).

Each of us must ask himself honestly, “Am I a true child of God or am I a counterfeit Christian? Have I truly been born of God?”

If you have not experienced eternal life, this *real* life, you *can* experience it right now! Read 1 John 5:9-15 carefully. God has “gone on record” in His Word. He offers you the gift of eternal life. Believe His promise and ask Him for His gift. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

We have discovered two important facts about “the life that is real”: it is revealed in Jesus Christ and it is experienced when we put our trust in Him as our Saviour. But John does not stop here!

THIS LIFE IS SHARED (1 JOHN 1:3-4)

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1 John 1:3). And once *you* have experienced this exciting life that is real, *you* will want to share it with other people, just as John wanted to “declare” it to all his readers in the first century.

A pastor had a phone call from an angry woman. “I have received a piece of religious literature from your church,” she shouted, “and I resent your using the mails to upset people!”

“What was so upsetting about a piece of mail from a church?” the pastor asked calmly.

“You have no right to try to change my religion!” the woman stormed. “You have your religion and I have mine, and I’m not trying to change yours!” (She really was, but the pastor didn’t argue with her.)

“Changing your religion, or anybody else’s religion, is not our purpose,” the pastor explained. “But we have experienced a wonderful new life through faith in Christ, and we want to do all we can to share it with others.”

Many people (including some Christians) have the idea that “witnessing” means wrangling over the differences in religious beliefs, or sitting down and comparing churches.

That isn’t what John had in mind! He tells us that witnessing means sharing our spiritual experiences with others—both by the lives that we live and by the words that we speak.

John wrote this letter to share Christ with us. As you read it, you will discover that John had in mind *five* purposes for sharing.

Chapter Two

Walking And Talking

1 John 1:5-2:6

Every form of life has its enemies. Insects have to watch out for hungry birds, and birds must keep an eye on hungry cats and dogs. Even human beings have to dodge automobiles and fight off germs.

The life that is real also has an enemy, and we read about it in this section. This enemy is *sin*. Nine times in these verses John mentions sin, so the subject is obviously not unimportant. John illustrates his theme by using the contrast between light and darkness: God is light; sin is darkness.

But there is another contrast here too—the contrast between *saying* and *doing*. Four times John writes, “If we say” or “He that saith” (1 John 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4). It is clear that our Christian life is to amount to more than mere “talk”; we must also “walk,” or *live*, what we believe. If we are in fellowship with God (if we are “walking in the light”), our lives will back up what our lips are saying. But if we are living in sin (“walking in darkness”), then our lives will contradict what our lips are saying, making us hypocrites.

The New Testament calls the Christian life a “walk.” This *walk* begins with a step of faith when we trust Christ as our Saviour. But salvation is not the end—it’s only the beginning—of spiritual life. “Walking” involves progress, and Christians are supposed to advance in the spiritual life. Just as a child must learn to walk and must overcome many difficulties in doing so, a Christian must learn to “walk in the light.” And the fundamental difficulty involved here is this matter of *sin*.

Of course, sin is not simply outward disobedience; sin is also inner rebellion or desire. For example, we are warned about the desires of the flesh and of the eyes and about the pride of life (1 John 2:16), all of which are sinful. Sin is also transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4), or literally, “lawlessness.” Sin is refusal to submit to the Law of God. Lawlessness, or independence of the Law, is the very essence of sin. If a believer decides to live an independent life, how can he possibly walk in fellowship with God? “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3)

Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New does the Bible whitewash the sins of the saints. In escaping a famine, Abraham became weak in his faith and went down to Egypt and lied to Pharaoh (Gen. 12). Later, the patriarch tried to “help God” by marrying Hagar and begetting a son (Gen. 16). In both cases, God forgave Abraham his sin, but Abraham had to reap what he had sowed. God can and will cleanse the record, but He does not change the results. No one can unscramble an egg.

Peter denied the Lord three times and tried to kill a man in the Garden when Jesus was arrested. Satan is a liar and a murderer (John 8:44), and Peter was playing right into his

hands! Christ forgave Peter (cf. John 21), of course, but what Peter had done hurt his testimony greatly and hindered the Lord's work.

The fact that Christians sin bothers some people—especially new Christians. They forget that their receiving the new nature does not eliminate the old nature they were born with. The old nature (which has its origin in our physical birth) fights against the new nature which we receive when we are born again (Gal. 5:16-26). No amount of self-discipline, no set of man-made rules and regulations, can control this old nature. Only the Holy Spirit of God can enable us to “put to death” the old nature (Rom. 8:12-13) and produce the Spirit's fruit (Gal. 5:22-23) in us through the new nature.

Sinning saints are not mentioned in the Bible to discourage us, but to warn us.

“Why do you keep preaching to us Christians about sin?” an angry church member said to her pastor. “After all, sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the life of an unsaved person!”

“Yes,” replied the pastor, “it *is* different. It's *much worse!*”

All of us, therefore, must deal with our sins if we are to enjoy the life that is real. In this section, John explains three approaches to sin.

WE CAN TRY TO COVER OUR SINS (1 JOHN 1:5-6, 8, 10; 2:4)

“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). When we were saved, God called us out of darkness into His light (1 Peter 2:9). We are children of light (1 Thes. 5:5). Those who do wrong hate light (John 3:19-21). When light shines in on us, it reveals our true nature (Eph. 5:8-13).

Light produces life and growth and beauty, but sin is darkness; and darkness and light cannot exist in the same place. If we are walking in the light, the darkness has to go. If we are holding to sin, then the light goes. There is no middle ground, no vague “gray” area, where sin is concerned.

How do Christians try to cover up their sins? *By telling lies!* First, we tell lies to *others* (1 John 1:6). We want our Christian friends to think we are “spiritual,” so we lie about our lives and try to make a favorable impression on them. We want them to think that we are walking in the light, though in reality we are walking in the darkness.

Once one begins to lie to others, he will sooner or later lie to *himself*, and our passage deals with this (1 John 1:8). The problem now is not deceiving others, but deceiving ourselves. It is possible for a believer to live in sin yet convince himself that everything is fine in his relationship to the Lord.

Perhaps the classic example of this is King David (2 Sam. 11-12). First David lusted after Bathsheba. Then he actually committed adultery. Instead of openly admitting what he had done, he tried to cover his sin. He tried to deceive Bathsheba’s husband, made him drunk, and had him killed. He lied to himself and tried to carry on his royal duties in the usual way. When his court chaplain, the Prophet Nathan, confronted him with a similar hypothetical situation, David condemned the other man, though he felt no condemnation at all for himself. Once we begin to lie to others, it may not be long before we actually *believe* our lie.

But the spiritual decline becomes still worse: the next step is trying to lie *to God* (1 John 1:10). We have made ourselves liars; now we try to make God a liar! We contradict His Word, which says that “*all* have sinned,” and we maintain that we are exceptions to the rule. We apply God’s Word to others but not to ourselves. We sit through church services or Bible studies and are not touched by the Bible’s teachings. Believers who have reached this low level are usually highly critical of other Christians, but they strongly resist applying the Word to their own lives.

The Holy Spirit’s inspired picture of the human heart is devastating indeed! A believer lies about *his fellowship* (1 John 1:6); about *his nature*—“*I could never do a thing like that!*” (1 John 1:8) and about *his actions* (1 John 1:10).

Sin has a deadly way of spreading, doesn’t it?

At this point we must discuss an extremely important factor in our experience of the life that is real. That factor is *honesty*. We must be honest with ourselves, honest with

others, and honest with God. Our passage describes a believer who is living a dishonest life: he is a phony. He is playing a role and acting a part, but is not living a genuine life. He is insincere.

What losses does this kind of person experience?

For one thing, he loses *the Word*. He stops “doing the truth” (1 John 1:6); then the truth is no longer in him (1 John 1:8); and then he turns the truth into lies! (1 John 1:10) “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17) said Jesus; but a person who lives a lie loses the Word. One of the first symptoms of walking in darkness is a loss of blessing from the Bible. You cannot read the Word profitably while you are walking in the dark.

But a dishonest person loses something else: he loses his fellowship with God and with God’s people (1 John 1:6-7). As a result, prayer becomes an empty form to him. Worship is dull routine. He becomes critical of other Christians and starts staying away from church: “What communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14)

A backslidden husband, for example, who is walking in spiritual darkness, out of fellowship with God, can never enjoy full fellowship with his Christian wife, who is walking in the light. In a superficial way, the couple can have companionship; but true spiritual fellowship is impossible. This inability to share spiritual experiences causes many personal problems in homes and between members of local churches.

A group of church members were discussing their new pastor.

“For some reason,” said one man, “I really don’t feel at ease with him. I believe he’s a good man, all right—but something seems to stand between us.”

Another member replied, “Yes, I think I know what you mean. I used to have that same problem with him, but now I don’t have it anymore. The pastor and I have great fellowship.”

“What did he do to make things better?”

“*He* didn’t do anything,” said the friend. “*I* did the changing.”

“*You* did the changing?”

“Yes, I decided to be open and honest about things, the way our pastor is. You see, there isn’t one stain of hypocrisy in his life, and there was so much pretending in *my* life that we just didn’t make it together. He and I both knew I was a phony. Since I’ve started to live an honest Christian life, *everything* is better.”

One problem with dishonesty is that just keeping a record of our lies and pretenses is a full-time job! Abraham Lincoln used to say that if a man is going to be a liar, he had better have a good memory! When a person uses up all his energy in *pretending*, he has nothing left for *living*, and life becomes shallow and tasteless. A person who pretends not only robs himself of reality, but he keeps himself from growing: his true self is smothered under the false self.

The third loss is really the result of the first two: the believer loses his character (1 John 2:4). The process starts out with his *telling* lies and it ends up with his *becoming* a

liar! His insincerity, or lack of truthfulness, is at first a role that he plays. Then it is no longer a role—it has become the very essence of his life. His character has eroded. He is no longer a liar because he tells lies; he now tells lies because he is a confirmed liar.

Is it any wonder that God warns, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper”? (Prov. 28:13) David tried to cover his sins and it cost him his health (Ps. 32:3-4), his joy (Ps. 51), his family, and almost his kingdom. If we want to enjoy the life that is real, we must *never* cover our sins.

What *should* we do?

WE CAN CONFESS OUR SINS (1 JOHN 1:7, 9)

John gives two interesting titles to Jesus Christ: *Advocate* and *Propitiation* (1 John 2:1-2). It's important that we understand these two titles because they stand for two ministries that only the Lord Himself performs.

Let's begin with *Propitiation*. If you look this word up in the dictionary, you may get the wrong idea of its meaning. The dictionary tells us that "to propitiate" means "to appease someone who is angry." If you apply this to Christ, you get the horrible picture of an angry God, about to destroy the world, and a loving Saviour giving Himself to appease the irate God—and this is *not* the Bible picture of salvation! Certainly God is angry at sin; after all, He is infinitely holy. But the Bible reassures us that "God so *loved* [not *hated*] the world" (John 3:16, italics added).

No, the word "propitiation" does not mean the appeasing of an angry God. Rather, it means *the satisfying of God's holy law*. "God is light" (1 John 1:5) and, therefore, He cannot close His eyes to sin. But "God is love" (1 John 4:8) too and wants to save sinners.

How, then, can a holy God uphold His own justice and still forgive sinners? The answer is in the sacrifice of Christ. At the cross, God in His holiness judged sin. God in His love offers Jesus Christ to the world as Saviour. God was *just* in that He punished sin, but He is also *loving* in that He offers free forgiveness through what Jesus did at Calvary. (Read 1 John 4:10, and also give some thought to Rom. 3:23-26.)

Christ is the Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, but He is Advocate only for believers. "We [Christians] have an Advocate with the Father." The word "advocate" used to be applied to lawyers. The word John uses is the very same word Jesus used when He was talking about the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26). It means, literally, "one called alongside." When a man was summoned to court, he took an advocate (lawyer) with him to stand at his side and plead his case.

Jesus finished His work on earth (John 17:4)—the work of giving His life as a sacrifice for sin. Today He has an "unfinished work" in heaven. *He represents us before God's throne*. As our High Priest, He sympathizes with our weaknesses and temptations and gives us grace (Heb. 4:15-16; 7:23-28). As our Advocate, He helps us *when we sin*. When we confess our sins to God, because of Christ's advocacy God forgives us.

The Old Testament contains a beautiful picture of this. Joshua (Zech. 3:1-7) was the Jewish high priest after the Jews returned to their land following their Captivity in Babylon. (Don't confuse this Joshua with the Joshua who conquered the Promised Land.) The nation had sinned; to symbolize this, Joshua stood before God in filthy garments and Satan stood at Joshua's right hand to accuse him (cf. Rev. 12:10). God the Father was the Judge; Joshua, representing the people, was the accused; Satan was the prosecuting attorney. (The Bible calls him the accuser of the brethren.) It looked as if Satan had an open-and-shut case. But Joshua had an Advocate who stood at God's right hand, and this

("justification") before God. God is able to forgive because Jesus' death has satisfied His holy Law.

But God is also interested in cleansing a sinner inwardly. David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Ps. 51:10). When our confession is sincere, God does a cleansing work (1 John 1:9) in our hearts by His Spirit and through His Word (John 15:3).

The great mistake King David made was in trying to cover his sins instead of confessing them. For perhaps a whole year he lived in deceit and defeat. No wonder he wrote (Ps. 32:6) that a man should pray "in a time of finding out" (lit.).

When should we confess our sin? *Immediately when we discover it!* "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). By walking in the light, we are able to see the "dirt" in our lives and deal with it immediately.

This leads to a third way to deal with sins.

1 JOHN 1-2

These two chapters deal with fellowship, and in them, John gives us the three tests of true fellowship. Note the contrast between saying and doing: "If we say..." (1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 6). Too many times we are better at the "talk" than we are at the "walk"! In 1:1-4, John introduces his theme: Christ the Word who has revealed the Father. (See 1:1-14.) He explains that when Christ was here on earth, He was a real Person, not a phantom, and that He had a real body (Luke 24:39). The false teachers of John's day were denying that Jesus had come in the flesh. If we do not have a real Christ, how can we have real forgiveness of sin? John is being a witness by telling what he had seen and heard (Acts 4:20). He explains that Christ was manifested to reveal God and to make possible our fellowship with Him. See also 3:5, 8, and 4:9 for other reasons why Christ came.

I. The Test of Obedience (1:5-2:6)

John introduces us to the image of light (John 1:4). God is light, and Satan is the prince of darkness (Luke 22:53). To obey Him is to walk in the light; to disobey is to walk in darkness. Keep in mind that fellowship is a matter of light and darkness; sonship is a matter of life and death (3:4; 5:11-12). John points out that it is possible for people to say they are in the light, yet actually live in darkness. Note the four "liars" here: (1) lying about fellowship, 1:6-7; (2) lying about our nature, saying that we have no sin, 1:8; (3) lying about our deeds, saying that we have not sinned, 1:10; and (4) lying about our obedience, saying that we have kept His commandments when we have not, 2:4-6.

Christians do sin, but this does not mean they must be saved all over again. Sin in the life of the believer breaks the fellowship but does not destroy the sonship. A true Christian is always accepted even if he is not acceptable. How does God provide for the sins of the saints? Through the heavenly ministry of Christ. We are saved from the penalty of sin by His death (Rom. 5:6-9), and we are saved daily from the power of sin by His life (Rom. 5:10). The word "advocate" means "one who pleads a case" and is the same Gk. word as "Comforter" in John 14:16. The Holy Spirit represents Christ to us on earth, and the Son represents us to God in heaven. His wounds testify that He died for us, and therefore God can forgive when we confess our sins. Read carefully Rom. 8:31-34. The word "confess" means "to say the same thing." To confess sin means to say the same thing about it that God says. Keep in mind that Christians do not have to do penance, make sacrifices, or punish themselves when they have sinned. Every sin has already been taken care of at the cross. Does this give us license to sin? Of course not! The Christian who truly understands God's provision for a life of holiness does not want to deliberately disobey God.

II. The Test of Love (2:7-17)

A. The new commandment (vv. 7-11).

See John 13:34. When we are in fellowship with God, walking in the light, we also walk in love. It is a basic spiritual principle that when Christians are out of fellowship with God, they cannot get along with God's people. We are all members of God's family, so we ought to love one another. This was even an "old commandment" back in the days of Moses (Lev. 19:18).

B. The new family (vv. 12-14).

Like a loving father, John calls the saints "little children"; all of God's children have been forgiven. But we ought to grow in the Lord, becoming strong young men and women in the faith and ultimately spiritual "fathers and mothers."

C. The new danger (vv. 15-17).

There is conflict between love for the Father and love for the world. By "the world" John means all that belongs to this life that is opposed to Christ. It is Satan's system, society opposed to God and taking the place of God. If we love the world, we lose the love of the Father and cease to do His will. Anything in our lives that dulls our love for spiritual things or that makes it easy for us to sin is worldly and must be put away. John mentions three specific problems: the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life. Is this not what the people of the world live for? But living for the world means losing everything in time, because the world is passing away. Lot suffered such loss. But if we live for God, we will abide forever.

There can be no true fellowship without love. Unless we love God and God's children, we cannot walk in the light and fellowship with God.

1 JOHN 3

We move now into the second half of the letter, which deals with sonship. The word “fellowship” is not found in this section at all. Instead, John emphasizes being “born of God” (see 3:9; 4:7; 5:4). This passage ties in with John 3 and emphasizes the theme “God is love” (4:8, 16). In this chapter, John states that a true child of God will prove his spiritual birth by being obedient to God’s Word. He gives five motives for obedience:

I. God’s Wonderful Love (3:1)

“Behold, what foreign-kind of love” is literally what John writes. Paul had this idea in mind when he wrote Rom. 5:6-10. Love is the greatest motive in the world, and if we understand God’s love, we will obey His Word. “If you love me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). Of course, the world has no understanding of this love, and the world hates us. But the world does not know Christ, so it cannot know Christ’s own.

II. Christ's Promised Return (3:2-3)

What we are now is wonderful; but what we shall be is even more wonderful! "We shall be like Him." This means inheriting a glorified body like His body (Phil. 3:20-21) and sharing in His eternal glory (John 17:24). But the saint who really expects Christ to return will obey His Word and keep his life clean. We shall see Him "as He is," but we must also "walk as He walked" (see 2:6) and "be righteous even as He is" (3:7). Saints are expected to purify themselves, that is, keep their hearts clean (2 Cor. 7:1).

IV. The New Nature Within (3:9-18)

The key thought of chapters 3-5 is “sonship,” which results in a new nature within the believer. God does not destroy or eradicate the old nature; rather, He implants a new nature that gives the believer a desire for spiritual things. Verse 9 should say, “Whosoever is born of God does not habitually, deliberately sin; for he has the seed of the new nature within.” This new nature cannot sin. Of course, believers who yield to the old nature will stumble and fall. See Gal. 6:1-2.

John contrasts the children of God and the children of the devil, using Cain and Abel as examples. Abel had faith and was accepted; Cain tried to be saved by works but was not accepted (Gen. 4). Cain was a liar and a murderer, like the devil (John 8:44); he murdered his brother, then lied about it to God. Genesis 3:15 states that Satan’s seed (children) will oppose God’s seed. Note Matt. 3:7 and 23:33. This will finally culminate in Christ’s battle with the Antichrist in the last days. But please note that Satan’s children are “religious.” Cain worshiped at an altar, and the Pharisees were the most religious people of their day. Not religion, but a true love for God and God’s children, should be the test of our devotion to God. True Christians do not hate and murder; instead, they show love and try to help others. The new nature that is implanted at the new birth is responsible for this change.

WE CAN CONQUER OUR SINS (1 JOHN 2:1-3, 5-6)

John makes it clear that Christians do not *have* to sin. “I am writing these things unto you *that you may not sin*” (1 John 2:1, NASB).

The secret of victory over sin is found in the phrase “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7).

To walk in the light means to be open and honest, to be sincere. Paul prayed that his friends might “be sincere and without offense” (Phil. 1:10). The word *sincere* comes from two Latin words, *sine* and *cera*, which mean “without wax.” It seems that in Roman days, some sculptors covered up their mistakes by filling the defects in their marble statues with wax, which was not readily visible—until the statue had been exposed to the hot sun awhile. But more dependable sculptors made certain that their customers knew that the statues they sold were *sine cera*—without wax.

It is unfortunate that churches and Bible classes have been invaded by insincere people, people whose lives cannot stand to be tested by God’s light. “God is light,” and when we walk in the light, there is nothing we can hide. It is refreshing to meet a Christian who is open and sincere and is not trying to masquerade!

To walk in the light means to be honest with God, with ourselves, and with others. It means that when the light reveals our sin to us, we immediately confess it to God and claim His forgiveness. And if our sin injures another person, we ask *his* forgiveness too.

But walking in the light means something else: it means obeying God’s Word (1 John 2:3-4). “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). To walk in the light means to spend time daily in God’s Word, discovering His will; and then obeying what He has told us.

Obedience to God’s Word is proof of our love for Him. There are three motives for obedience. We can obey because we *have to*, because we *need to*, or because we *want to*.

A slave obeys because he *has* to. If he doesn’t obey he will be punished. An employee obeys because he *needs* to. He may not enjoy his work, but he *does* enjoy getting his paycheck! He needs to obey because he has a family to feed and clothe. But a Christian is to obey his Heavenly Father because he *wants* to—for the relationship between him and God is one of love. “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

This is the way we learned obedience when we were children. First, we obeyed because we *had* to. If we didn’t obey, we were spanked! But as we grew up, we discovered that obedience meant enjoyment and reward; so we started obeying because it met certain *needs* in our lives. And it was a mark of real maturity when we started obeying because of love.

“Baby Christians” must constantly be warned or rewarded. Mature Christians listen to God’s Word and obey it simply because they love Him.

Walking in the light involves honesty, obedience, and love; it also involves following the example of Christ and walking as He walked (1 John 2:6). Of course, nobody ever

becomes a Christian by following Christ's example; but *after* we come into God's family, we are to look to Jesus Christ as the one great Example of the kind of life we should live.

This means "abiding in Christ." Christ is not only the Propitiation (or sacrifice) for our sins (1 John 2:2) and the Advocate who represents us before God (1 John 2:1), but He is also the perfect Pattern (He is "Jesus Christ the righteous") for our daily life.

The key statement here is "as He is" (1 John 2:6). "Because *as He is*, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). We are to walk in the light "*as He is* in the light" (1 John 1:7). We are to purify ourselves "even *as He is* pure" (1 John 3:3). "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even *as He is* righteous" (1 John 3:7). Walking in the light means living here on earth the way Jesus lived when He was here, and the way He is right now in heaven.

This has extremely practical applications in our daily lives. For example, what should a believer do when another believer sins against him? The answer is that believers should forgive one another "*even as* God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32; cf. Col. 3:13).

Walking in the light—following the example of Christ—will affect a home. Husbands are supposed to love their wives "even as Christ also loved the church" (Eph. 5:25). Husbands are supposed to care for their wives "even as the Lord" cares for the church (Eph. 5:29). And wives are to honor and obey their husbands (Eph. 5:22-24).

No matter what area of life it may be, our responsibility is to do what Jesus would do. "As He is, so are we in this world." We should "walk [live] even as He walked [lived]."

Jesus Himself taught His disciples what it means to abide in Him. He explains it in His illustration of the vine and its branches (John 15). Just as the branch gets its life by remaining in contact with the vine, so believers receive their strength by maintaining fellowship with Christ.

To abide in Christ means to depend completely on Him for all that we need in order to live for Him and serve Him. It is a living relationship. As He lives out His life through us, we are able to follow His example and walk as He walked. Paul expresses this experience perfectly: "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

This is a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ is our Advocate in heaven (1 John 2:1), to represent us before God when we sin. The Holy Spirit is God's Advocate for us here on earth. Christ is making intercession for us (Rom. 8:34), and the Holy Spirit is also making intercession for us (Rom. 8:26-27). We are part of a fantastic "heavenly party line": God the Son prays for us in heaven, and God the Spirit prays for us in our hearts. We have fellowship with the Father through the Son, and the Father has fellowship with us through the Spirit.

Christ lives out His life through us by the power of the Spirit, who lives within our bodies. It is not by means of *imitation* that we abide in Christ and walk as He walked. No, it is through *incarnation*: through His Spirit, "Christ liveth in me." To walk in the light is to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:16).

God has made provisions for us in these ways to conquer sin. We can never lose or change the sin nature that we were born with (1 John 1:8), but we need not obey its desires. As we walk in the light and see sin as it actually is, we will hate it and turn from it. And if we sin, we immediately confess it to God and claim His cleansing. By depending on the power of the indwelling Spirit, we abide in Christ and “walk as He walked.”

But all this begins with openness and honesty before God and men. The minute we start to act a part, to pretend, to impress others, we step out of the light and into shadows. Sir Walter Scott puts it this way:

Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!

The life that is real cannot be built on things that are deceptive. Before we can walk in the light, we must know ourselves, accept ourselves, and yield ourselves to God. It is foolish to try to deceive others because God already knows what we really are!

All this helps to explain why walking in the light makes life so much easier and happier. When you walk in the light, you live to please only one Person—God. This really simplifies things! Jesus said, “I do always those things that please *Him*” (John 8:29, italics added). We “ought to walk and to please God” (1 Thes. 4:1). If we live to please ourselves *and* God, we are trying to serve two masters, and this never works. If we live to please men, we will always be in trouble because no two men will agree and we will find ourselves caught in the middle. Walking in the light—living to please God—simplifies our goals, unifies our lives, and gives us a sense of peace and poise.

John makes it clear that the life that is real has no love for sin. Instead of trying to cover sin, a true believer confesses sin and tries to conquer it by walking in the light of God’s Word. He is not content simply to know he is going to heaven. He wants to enjoy that heavenly life right here and now. “As He is, so are we in this world.” He is careful to match his walk and his talk. He does not try to impress himself, God, or other Christians with a lot of “pious talk.”

A congregation was singing, as a closing hymn, the familiar song, “For You I Am Praying.” The speaker turned to a man on the platform and asked quietly, “For whom are *you* praying?”

The man was stunned. “Why, I guess I’m not praying for anybody. Why do you ask?”

“Well, I just heard you say, ‘For you I am praying,’ and I thought you meant it,” the preacher replied.

“Oh, no,” said the man. “I’m just singing.”

Pious talk! A religion of words! To paraphrase James 1:22, “We should be doers of the Word as well as talkers of the Word.” We must *walk* what we *talk*. It is not enough to know the language; we must also live the life. “If we say—” then we ought also *to do!*

1 JOHN 1

Chapter Summary

The prologue (1:1-4) establishes the author's credibility: He is an eyewitness. But even more, it lays the foundation of faith. God the Father has a Son, the source of eternal life. This Son, Jesus Christ, has lived in our world, and those who believe in Him have fellowship with Him even now—and through that fellowship, joy.

But to have fellowship with God a person must “walk in the light.” In context and in Johannine theology “light” is utter, absolute truth. To walk in the light is to be honest with God and with ourselves (vv. 5-7). It is neither true nor honest to claim that we are without sin (v. 8). Instead, we are to confess (acknowledge) our sins—and through confession experience both the forgiving and cleansing power of God (vv. 9-10). As we bring our weaknesses to God He will transform us and enable us to become the obedient, loving, and trusting people the rest of this letter calls us to be.

KEY VERSE

1:9: Our part, His part.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

The person who excuses himself for his sins is weighted down by them. One who confesses his sins leaves them behind.

KEY CONCEPTS

Eternal life. Fellowship. Light. Darkness. Sin.

Insight

“From the beginning” (1:1). In John 1:1 “the Word” (Christ) was “in the beginning.” Here is the Gospel John has heard and proclaims is from the beginning. God’s plan of salvation is rooted in eternity, although its expression in the flesh is something John himself has witnessed in Jesus.

“God is light” (1:5). To sense the significance of this statement, imagine yourself stumbling through a strange place on the darkest of nights. All you can see is shadows that frighten and confuse. And then, suddenly, a bright light shines on the scene and you can see everything clearly. There are no more illusions, no more imagined fears. Now at last you can find your way safely, for you can see every obstacle for what it really is. In the

spiritual realm darkness blinds human beings, forcing the lost to live in a world of illusion. Only if we walk in the light shed by God through His Word can we see things for what they really are—and respond appropriately.

“Live by the truth” (1:6). A basic meaning of both the Heb. and Gk. words translated “truth” is “in full harmony with reality.” If we are to have fellowship with God, we must not only see things as they are, but we must live by the reality thus revealed.

Purified from every sin (1:7). Some have taken the “light” as sinlessness. But this verse tells us that when we walk in the light, Christ’s blood purifies us from every sin. If we are honest with ourselves and God we will see our sins in the light of God’s Word—and will appeal to Christ for purification.

“Without sin” (1:8). Don’t ever suppose that salvation makes a person sinless. And don’t dismiss anger as righteous indignation, or vindictiveness as justice. Sin is our constant companion and will be, until Jesus comes and we are transformed into His likeness. Only if you and I recognize our vulnerability and are honest about our failures, will we remain in fellowship with God and grow.

Confess sins (1:9-10). The Gk. word “confess” is *homologeō*, which means “speak the same thing,” i.e., acknowledge. Confessing sins is not “saying you’re sorry.” It is agreeing with God that a particular act is sin—and thus taking sides with Him and against yourself. What happens if we confess our sins? Then God forgives our sins and continues the process of purification from unrighteousness the Spirit has begun in us. What happens if we make excuses, or refuse to acknowledge a particular act was sin? We put up a barrier between ourselves and God. In essence, we deny that His word about our sinful act is true and cut ourselves off from His transforming power.

1 JOHN 2

Chapter Summary

John has promised that if we confess our sins, God will forgive and cleanse (1:9-10). His motive is not to encourage but discourage sinning! Knowing the full extent of the love God extends in Christ's atonement motivates us to serve Him (2:1-2). Salvation is a transforming experience, and those who truly know God will obey His commands and seek to "walk as Jesus did" (vv. 3-6). Mention of God's commands turns the apostle's thought to Jesus' "new command"—a command which while new is also old. The believer who loves his brothers obeys this command and so walks in the light. The person who "hates his brother" is still stumbling around in the realm of darkness (vv. 7-11).

Again John's thoughts turn, this time stimulated by his mention of darkness. He addresses the whole church, represented as children, young men, and fathers. We can overcome by knowing Christ and appropriating His Word (vv. 12-14). But the believer must not love the world's ways or share its passions (vv. 15-17) or be deceived by antichrists who deny Christ and try to lead us astray (vv. 18-25). The Holy Spirit will enable the true believer to recognize truth and error and to remain in Him (vv. 26-29).

KEY VERSE

2:20: God's inner voice.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Jesus' people live as Jesus lived.

KEY CONCEPTS

Christ. Atonement (1). Atonement (2). Atonement (3). Love (1). Love (2). Darkness. Antichrist (1). Antichrist (2).

Insight

"Not sin" (2:1-2). Some assume that only fear of punishment can keep a person from sinning. The N.T. assumes that the prime motivator of obedience is love. Knowing God will forgive us if we fail helps us sense the depth of His love for us in Christ. We choose godliness because we respond to that love with gratitude and love of our own.

Knowing God (2:4-6, 29). In John, knowing God is not academic, theoretical, nor intellectual. Knowing God is personal, practical, and experiential. To know God is not

simply to trust Him, but also to live in daily fellowship with Him. Anyone who claims to “know God” in this personal, intimate way and who is disobedient to the Word or hostile toward other Christians “is a liar.”

Walking as Jesus walked (2:6). In the Bible, “walking” is a frequent figure of behavior or lifestyle. Since Jesus lives in the believer, a person who is living close to Him will have a Christlike lifestyle. Christ loved and gave Himself for us. Anyone who hates his brother is still in darkness. Love for others is one way that Jesus expresses Himself in our lives.

Overcoming the evil one (2:13-14). The Gk. word *nikao* means “to win a victory” or “to conquer.” The Christian cannot be victimized by Satan or the world—against his or her will. If we stay close to Jesus we share by faith in the victory He won (cf. also John 16:33; 1 John 5:4).

“The world” (2:15-17). The Gk. *kosmos* when used theologically refers to the “order” or “arrangement” of human society as a system warped by sin, awash with swirling beliefs, desires, and emotions. The world is antagonistic to God (Col. 2:20; 1 John 2:16) and lies under Satan’s authority (1 John 5:9).

Worldliness (2:15-17). Given the nature of “world” in the N.T., worldliness is not a matter of some list of do’s and don’ts. It is adopting the perspectives (cravings), the values (lust of the eyes), and attitudes (the boasting of status) of man’s society rather than the perspective, values, and attitudes of God.

Lost after believing? (2:19) John has a different explanation.

Our anointing (2:20-27). The word *chrisma* looks not on the act of rubbing or spreading, but on that with which one is anointed. Here, this is the Holy Spirit who teaches us (John 16:12-15).

1 JOHN 3

Chapter Summary

God's great love has reached out to make us His very children. We do not know our ultimate destiny, except that we will be like Jesus—and that everyone who looks forward to that transformation purifies himself or herself even now (3:1-3).

In fact, continuing in sin is evidence that a person does not know God. Sin can be traced back to Satan, and Christ appeared to destroy the devil's work. It follows that no one born of God will make a practice of sinning: The divine life planted deep in the personality will now prevent it (vv. 4-10).

Again the theme of "doing what is right" turns John's thoughts to love. Evil persons hate righteous ones, and hatred is the source of murder. Surely no murderer is infused with eternal life! (vv. 11-15) Rather than take another's life, the one who loves is willing to lay down his own life for others, even as Jesus laid down his life for us. When this kind of love has practical expression in our lives, we know we belong to the Lord (vv. 16-20). Keep on loving and obeying God and we will have confidence before God and power in prayer (vv. 21-24).

KEY VERSE

3:16: A living definition.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Love does find a way to express itself.

KEY CONCEPTS

Child of God. Sin (1). Sin (2). Sin (3). Sin (4). Sin (5). Righteous (1). Righteous (2). Born again. The Devil. Hate (1). Hate (2). World. Obey. Prayer.

Insight

Purifying hope (3:3). Hope is confident expectation, certainty about the future. If we know our destiny is to be like Jesus, this sense of our true identity will move us to be like Him now.

"Lawlessness" (3:4). John's point is that when we break the law (sin) we rebel against God. Any violation of the moral standards God has revealed is rebelliousness. What we do in the flesh is of real importance!

Lead astray (3:7). False teachers have little concern for morality, as the pressure in some churches to ordain practicing homosexuals makes clear. John warns us not to be deceived. Those who “do what is sinful” are “of the devil,” not God.

“Destroy the devil’s work” (3:8). The word here is *lyo*, “to undo.” All sinful acts reflect the character of Satan. Yet the harm done by Satan can be and is being undone by Jesus. How? Through Christ, God’s own “seed” (i.e., nature) has been planted in the personality of the believer. The devil’s work in us is being unraveled by God, so surely that “no one who is born of God will continue to sin.” This does not mean the believer will be sinless (cf. 1 John 1:7-10). It does mean that “he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.”

“Cain” (3:11-15). The Gen. 4 story illustrates several truths. The wicked tend to hate the righteous. Hatred expresses itself in evil acts like murder. Hostility itself is diabolical in origin. Thus, “hostile Christian” is a contradiction in terms. One who hates is a murderer in his heart and cannot be one who has eternal life.

Prayer conditions? (3:21-22) Some look at such sayings as “if our hearts do not condemn us” as a condition we must meet before God will answer our prayers. Yet, clearly John intends to encourage us. When we love, and our hearts do not condemn us, we know we are in a relationship with God in which He can answer our prayers. Other supposed conditions should be understood the same way. Disobedience (Deut. 1:43-45), unconcern (Isa. 58:7-9), and injustice (Micah 3:1-4) are signs we are out of fellowship with God. But even (1) two agreeing on God’s will (Matt. 18:19), (2) knowing our prayer is in harmony with Jesus’ character and expressed will (that is, “in Jesus’ name”) (John 14:13-14), and (3) sensing an inner, Spirit-taught confidence that we have asked according to God’s will (1 John 5:14-15) are not “conditions,” but God’s gracious indication that He has heard and will answer our prayers.

2 JOHN

In this brief letter the “chosen lady” John addresses may be a church and its members. Like 1 John, this letter emphasizes the importance of love, and links love to obedience. The letter contains a greeting (vv. 1-3), advice and warning (vv. 4-11), and a conclusion (vv. 12-13).

Chapter Summary

John's greeting links truth and love, for those who know and live the truth in Jesus are bound together in a community of love (vv. 1-3). John has been delighted to hear that "some" in the Christian community have been living in accord with God's truth, but urges even greater love and obedience (vv. 4-6). But his exhortation is accompanied by a warning. Deceivers, marked by their denial that Jesus is God in the flesh, abound. Any who come to the church without a clear affirmation of the deity of Jesus are to be refused access to the church (vv. 7-11). In closing, John expresses his desire to visit in person and sends greetings (vv. 12-13).

KEY VERSE

7: Still the key.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

The central issue in Christianity is who people say Jesus is.

KEY CONCEPTS

Choice. Truth (1). Truth (2). Truth (3). Truth (4). Love (1). Love (2). Love (3). Antichrist (1). Antichrist (2).

Insight

A promise (v. 3). Most 1st-century letters customarily offer a prayer or wish as the last element of their greeting. Here John departs from custom and makes a promise. How sure we can be that the Lord truly “will be with us in truth and love.”

God’s command (vv. 4-6). The noun “command” (entole) is used four times in these verses. John is clearly showing how we can fulfill the will of God. That will is for us to love and obey God and to love others.

These three are linked in Scripture and in our experience. Love for God stimulates obedience. Obedience indicates love. Love for others is both an overflow of our love for God and an obedient response to His command to love one another.

A deceiver and antichrist (v. 7). All the later N.T. epistles which speak of false teaching and teachers indicate a single doctrine is the key test of heresy. That is the doctrine of the full deity and humanity of Jesus: the conviction that Jesus was God with us in the flesh.

This is still a vital test to apply to any who claim to be teachers of religion. Anyone who comes to the church without this teaching is not to be welcomed or permitted to minister.

Why this particular doctrine? Because all the central teachings of our faith hinge on the deity of Jesus. The Incarnation and Virgin Birth, the vicarious sacrifice, the physical Resurrection, the Ascension, the Second Coming—all presuppose that the Jesus we know and worship is both God and man. If Jesus were not God, His death could hardly have made a universal atonement. If Jesus were not man, His resurrection could hardly be the “firstfruits” which guarantees our own.

There is only one way to God, only one truth, and only one source of eternal life. Never permit anyone who denies the deity and humanity of Jesus, however urbane or convincing he or she may be, to pass as a teacher of Christian truth.

John -

NOTICABLE TERMS & EXPRESSIONS (SIX WORDS &
11 EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN
1 John)

EARLY CHURCH FATHERS - IRENEUS, CYPRIAN,
ELEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, DIONYSIUS, EUSEBIUS

SENTIMENT, TONE & MANNER CONSISTENT WITH JOHN.

STUDIES IN 2 JOHN INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR: John, the apostle.

ADDRESSEE: The "Chosen Lady" and her "children" - two possibilities: a personification of a local church and its members, or an individual woman.

DATE/SETTING: Circa AD 90. John expresses joy over the fact that some are walking in truth; he also exhorts the brethren to walk in love. The letter contains a warning that false teachers are to be withstood and avoided. The truth is limited to the truth of Christ, and the Christian is not to go beyond that.

THEME/PURPOSE: Two key thoughts in 2 John are "love" and "truth." The greater context of this short epistle concerns false teachers. The conclusion contains the hope for a coming visit.

CHARACTERISTICS: If the letter is addressed to a certain woman, then it is the only book in the Bible addressed to a woman. We get a glimpse into some of the joys, encouragements, activities and dangers of the daily life of the Christian. It is the second shortest letter in the New Testament. The word "truth" is used some 40 times in all of John's writings.

BRIEF OUTLINE: Three Dangers That Must Be Avoided--

1. Knowing the truth but not practicing it (1-6)
2. Practicing the truth but not defending it (7,8,10,11)
3. Going beyond the truth (9)

QUESTIONS OVER 2 JOHN:

1. How does John refer to himself in this letter? How is the term used?
2. What fact brought John joy concerning those to whom he wrote?
3. The brethren are also exhorted to walk in _____.
4. What does John warn these people about?
5. Was it possible to lose all they had accomplished? How?
6. What is the penalty for going beyond the doctrine of Christ?
7. What does the expression "doctrine of Christ" mean?

3 JOHN

John's third letter is written to an individual named Gaius. Like John's other epistles this letter emphasizes love, truth, and obedience. It also indicates some of the tensions and difficulties which made life in the early church much like that of today. They too tried to build their own kingdom and rule over the church, rather than be a part of the larger fellowship of faith. John's letter reminds us that the church truly is one and that we ought to "work together for the truth" (v. 8).

Chapter Summary

John writes to a church leader named Gaius (v. 1). John commends him for his faithfulness to God (vv. 2-4). John also commends Gaius for the love he displays in welcoming the itinerant teachers who traveled from church to church in the first century (vv. 5-8). This is in contrast to the practice of one Diotrephes, who rejects John's authority and like a dictator puts out of the church any who disagree with his leadership (vv. 9-10). John urges Gaius to keep on doing good and commends another leader named Demetrius whom both of them know (vv. 11-12). John closes this letter as he did 2 John, expressing his desire to see Gaius soon and talk about these issues at greater length (vv. 13-14).

KEY VERSE

8: Cooperation.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Separation is from sin, not from Christian brothers and sisters.

KEY CONCEPTS

Joy. Truth (1). Truth (2). Truth (3). Truth (4) . Love (1). Love (2). Love (3). Hospitality .

Insight

“The elder” (v. 1). While “elder” can mean an old man, it undoubtedly is used here in the sense of a senior church leader. In the 2nd century it was used by Eusebius and Irenaeus of church officials who had been personal followers of one of the apostles. John may speak of himself as “the” elder because he was a personal follower of Jesus.

“Dear friend” (v. 2). The address sets the tone for what is clearly a warm, affectionate letter. John feels and expresses great delight in the faithfulness of this younger Christian leader. How enriching to grow close to others who love the Lord.

Itinerancy in the N.T. world. Travel was common in the 1st-century Roman Empire, both along well kept roads and by the hundreds of ships sailing the Mediterranean. People traveled for business purposes and on religious pilgrimages—the Jews to Jerusalem and pagans to such centers as Ephesus. In addition, itinerant teachers of philosophy and religion went from city to city, teaching in the streets, seeking to gather enough students to support them. It was natural for Christian teachers to travel too. The apostles traveled. Their representatives, such as Timothy and Titus, traveled. And of course false teachers traveled, seeking to infiltrate the church and gain a profit from the untaught and unsuspecting. Yet the world of the 1st century had few hotels. Travelers stayed in private homes, put up by people from their homeland or persons who shared their faith. The traveling Christian teachers of the 1st century visited a church, were usually provided food and lodging by a believer, and often were given gifts of money to help them travel to the next congregation. Second John reminds us that false teachers also traveled and that such visitors were to be questioned and not welcomed if they denied the deity and humanity of Jesus. In this letter Gaius is commended for the hospitality he extended to teachers sent by John, while a leader named Diotrephes is criticized.

Hospitality (v. 8). For more, see Matt. 10:10; Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2, 5:10; Heb. 13:2.

III JOHN

INTRODUCTION

John addresses himself to one who needed what he would have to say. After all, it was not easy to be faithful. There was opposition from without and within. One could easily become discouraged by those who did not act as they should.

Also, there are things that just cannot be ignored. In this case, John would let this good brother know that he and others were aware of it and it would be dealt with in due time. So into the midst of this situation John sends this letter. In it, we will find a number of rich lessons as it centers on three people.

I. John's Commendation. (v.1-6a)

Though there are dark spots in the environment, John would commend those whom he could. As you read these verses look at:

A. The Person Commended. (v.1)

His name is Gaius, but we do not know which one. This name appears in Acts 19:29, 22:4; Romans 16:23; and I Corinthians 1:14. He may have been one named here, but even so he was:

1. Esteemed Highly

He is called the "well beloved" and you can be sure that John was not seeking to flatter such a person.

2. Entreated Heartily

John says "whom I love in the truth". John reaches out to let Gaius know of his feeling for him.

B. The Prayer for the Commended. (v.2)

The esteem of verse one shows itself in the prayer for Gaius in verse two. He prays that Gaius might have:

1. Blessings of Life.

His prayer was that he might prosper and be in health. Such would make life more liveable. But he does not stop there. He prays that he might have a:

2. Balanced Life.

It is one thing to have health and prosperity, but the soul might suffer. So John's prayer is that there might be the proper balance. He wants the body to be as well off as the soul.

C. Pleasure he could take in the Commended. (v.3-4)
What John heard was not always good but of Gaius there was a:

1. Good Report.

That report was that the truth is in him and he is in the truth. That is the way he walks. This sort of a report would lead to:

2. Geniune Rejoicing.

In fact, John says he had no greater joy than to hear that such as Gaius walked in the truth. This indeed is commendable. After all, he is:

a. Active.

He is walking, not just marking time. Such a walk is also:

b. Accurate.

He is walking in the truth. That means he is properly guided.

D. The Practice of the Commended. (v.5-6a)

Gaius was a doer, not just a hearer. His practice was:

1. Consistent. (v.5)

Whatever he did was done faithfully. He kept on doing it in spite of what others did.

2. Charitable.

People could speak of his love for it had been demonstrated in his care for teachers of the truth.

II. John's Commandments. (v.6b-8)

What John says would have the force of a commandment though not worded in that way. What would be good to do should be done. Gaius was to be:

A. Hospitable to Teachers.

Those who taught would need a place for lodging as they traveled. If he were an elder this would be a natural thing for him.

B. Helpers of the Truth.

We help the truth by aiding those who preach it. We have a part in what they are doing. (Matt.10:40-42)
After all, these do not depend on outsiders for their support.

III. John's Complaint Against Diotrephes. (v.9-10)

This man was a thorn in the side of John and others and John faces up to the situation as he censures his:

A. Personal Ambition.

Diotrephes loved to have first place. He must have the first and last word. In short, he was a little pope.

B. Pompous Accusations.

His self-inflated ego would lead him to speak against John or anyone who might oppose him.

C. Perverted Action.

He will not support those who teach the truth, nor allow others who would. Surely he deserves to be censured.

IV. John's Caution To Gaius. (v.11)

The temptation present when dealing with a Diotrephes is to act like he does or resort to his methods. John, therefore, cautions:

1. Shun the wrong example.
2. Support that which edifies.

V. John's Confidence in Demetrius. (v.12)

John would show that not all men are as some men. This enables one to see the good in the midst of the bad. John shows one that Gaius can follow because of his:

A. Good Reputation.

He had a good report of all men. Such a reputation will enable him to be effective in the work he does.

B. Great Respect.

He is respected by John as well as others. This would surely enhance his reputation with Gaius.

VI. John's Continual Interest. (v.13-14)

Gaius would have to see this in John's:

A. Writing. Though he could not say all he wanted to he would say what he could.

B. Wishes. He wants to come and that would enable him to do what he could not by writing. Also, peace is a wish that John has for Gaius. Surely such would be needed when one had to face a Diotrephes.

C. Warmth. Twice within these verses John used the term "friends". Also, he asked that they be greeted by name and that makes it much more personal.

THEMES: ATTITUDE OF LOVE AND CONCERN FOR ONE ANOTHER
IMPORTANCE OF WALKING IN THE TRUTH
CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES
HOW TO DEAL WITH TYRANTS

STUDIES IN 3 JOHN

PENMAN: John, the "elder" (brother of James); son of Zebedee (Sons of Thunder); fisherman by trade; active with Peter in later work of the church (Acts 3:1; 15:6; Galatians 2:9; wrote 5 books of the NT; requested to sit at the side of Jesus Matthew 10:35ff - the other apostles were displeased); called for the destruction of the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56).

But, the change! The disciple whom Jesus loved (John 19:26); the "beloved" disciple; on the Mount of Transfiguration; last living of the 12 apostles.

ADDRESSEE: Gaius - (1) One of Paul's traveling companion from Macedonia (Acts 19:29); (2) Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20:4,5); (3) Paul's host in Corinth (Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14).

EMPHASIS: Written to commend and rebuke. Gaius and Demetrius were commended, and Diotrephes was rebuked. The Twentieth Century church is composed of the same type people, along with other kinds. How refreshing are good people, and how repulsive and destructive are arrogant church bosses like Diotrephes. Brethren need to applaud the one, and restore or discipline, the other.

THEME: Tensions and difficulties which made life difficult in the early church. 3 John is a letter of contrasts. It is the shortest book in the New Testament. 2 John has 245 words; 3 John has 219 words.

1st John speaks of *fellowship with God*;
2nd John speaks of *forbidding fellowship with false teachers*;
3rd John speaks of *encouraging fellowship with Christian brothers*.

DATE: AD 90

BRIEF OUTLINE: Confirmation of Gaius (1-8)
Condemnation of Diotrephes (9,10)
Commendation of Demetrius (11,12)

KEY VERSES: Verses 8,11

LESSONS:

1. Let us strive to be like humble men such as Gaius and Demetrius - men who esteem others better than themselves.
2. Let us shun any attitude that would make us like Diotrephes.

ADDITIONAL LESSONS:

1. SOMETIMES IT IS NOT EASY TO BE FAITHFUL
2. THERE IS OPPOSITION TO THE CHURCH FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT
3. A CHRISTIAN CAN EASILY BE DISCOURAGED
4. THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT JUST CAN'T BE IGNORED

6. What draws together, or drives apart, a fellowship or congregation?

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. What changes in our habits, attitudes, character and personality have been the result of our following Christ?
2. What are the identifiable signs we show as new creatures in Christ?
3. What difference has Christ made for us?
4. Do you have a deep, abiding sense of peace? (Jeremiah 8:11,20)

STUDIES IN JUDE

PENMAN: Jude, possibly the brother of the Lord

ADDRESSEES: Nothing is known beyond the fact they were Christians

DATE: circa AD 66

STYLE OF WRITING: Vigorous, rich and uses varied vocabulary; denunciatory in nature, severe in tone, full of warning; descriptions are sharp, penetrating, convincing; exhortations are touching, tender and full of warmth; conclusion is sublime, beautiful and vivid; doxology is the most beautiful in the New Testament; similar to 2 Peter; contains several "triads" (unparalleled in so short a space in any other portion of the Bible. Note: verses 1,2,5-7, 8-10,11,16-19,22,23,21,24)

PURPOSE: To strengthen and console those oppressed by their enemies and to stabilize their faith so as to be sustained in the midst of trials. Jude shares with the reader the rewards awaiting the righteous, and the punishment awaiting the wicked.

Certain men within the church had crept in privily, were being received and listened to, and whose influence was affecting the lives of Christians - Cf. verse 4.

METHOD OF WRITING: Jude uses illustrations of apostasy, its nature and its results. He also uses instructions for faithfulness.

DOCTRINES: God's justice

The Trinity

Character, dignity and work of the Savior

The pre-existence of Christ - from eternity; Object of worship; Judge

Eternal punishment

The Faith

The wickedness of false teachers

LESSONS

1. The final argument for faith in the world is not the argument of words, but the argument of life.
 - (1) "Contend earnestly" occurs nowhere else, but the root word is in other applications. We are not asked to defend the faith by arguing for it. the meaning is that of passionate and determined effort. It has the thought of the abandonment and cautiousness of the athlete.

- (2) Jude did not mean to lecture on Christian evidences (there is a place for this), nor form a league for the defense of the Bible, nor argue with every man you meet that these things are so. The final argument for faith and the way we are to obey this command is found in the closing verses of the book, i.e., building, praying and looking.
2. Many people complain at their lot, murmur and maintain that God is not good because they fall heir to the ills and difficulties of humanity. Others, through rationalization and means of empty phrases, seek to justify their conduct though it is opposed to the simplest and plainest teaching of the New Testament.
 3. We must never be indifferent to, or unmindful of those who would lead the faithful from the truth.
 4. Difficulties soon discover the unbelieving heart. Cf. Hebrews 4:6.
 5. We can be fully assured that no person is exempt the punishment if he disobeys God.
 6. Prosperity often becomes an occasion for much wickedness and impiety.
 7. Today we need such examples of wickedness and punishment. We need the restraint of fear as well as the allurements of love.
 8. Do not such sins as mentioned in Jude become even more heinous if committed in this dispensation of light?
 9. We should learn the underlying principle of this book, i.e., the perils of apostasy versus the powers of faith.
 10. Christianity is a life of building, growing, praying and longing.
 11. God is faithful to His word.
 12. "Necessity I had" - the writer felt a deeply, individual, personal responsibility. This should also be our attitude - may we have the faith and the courage to say what we ought to say, and to do what we ought to do in all places, at all times and under all circumstances. May we be characterized by this same kind of love - to be sincerely and meaningfully concerned about our brethren.

QUESTIONS

1. Give three ways Jude identifies himself.
2. What are the four assertions regarding the faith?

3. Name the three examples Jude uses to show God has judged the wicked in times past.
4. Who were the three rebels of the Pentateuch?
5. What was the outstanding sin of each of these three men?
6. What position in the church did the prophets (false) occupy which Jude warned against?
7. Give the two admonitions in verses 20-23 which Jude urges Christians to heed.
8. What three words sum up the teachings of Jude?
9. What is apostasy and how is it evidenced?
10. What is a “triad?”

JUDE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION (1-4)

1. Salutation (1,2)
2. Purpose (3)
3. Occasion (4)

II. WARNINGS (5-19)

1. Three examples from the Old Testament

- (1) Unfaithful Israelites (5, 8)
- (2) Angels (6,9)
- (3) Sodom and Gomorrah (7,10)

2. Three instances of individual wickedness (11)

- (1) Cain - disobedience
- (2) Balaam - greed
- (3) Korah - railing

3. Analysis of the wicked men with three tokens by which their condemnation would be manifested (12-19)

- (1) Illustration from nature (12,13)
- (2) Identity of conduct (14,15)
- (3) Ungodly language (16)
- (4) Fulfilling prophecy of the apostles (17,18)
- (5) Unfaithful conduct (19)

III. EXHORTATIONS (20-25)

1. As to themselves (20,21). They were to be

- (1) Firm in their faith (20)
- (2) Steadfast in love (21a)
- (3) Confident in hope (21b)

2. With reference to the wicked among them (22,23). They were to treat some

- (1) With gentle measures (22)
- (2) Others with sternness and vigor (23a)
- (3) All with abhorrence of their sins (23b)

3. With reference to God (24,25). All were to thank Him for

- (1) Assistance in preserving them (24a)
- (2) Grace in saving them (24b)
- (3) Wisdom in keeping them (25)

Outline of Jude

Greeting (1-2)

I. Purpose of the Letter (3-4)

II. Warning Against False Teachers (5-16)

A. Examples of Judgment (5-7)

B. Doom of False Teachers (8-13)

C. Enoch's Prophecy (14-16)

III. Exhortation to Believers (17-23)

Doxology (24-25)

JUDE

Chapter Summary

Jude modestly identifies himself and greets fellow believers (vv. 1-2). He had hoped to write a positive letter about the salvation they enjoy, but instead felt compelled by the appearance of so many false teachers to write a letter of warning (vv. 3-4). History has shown that God punishes the wicked and perverse (vv. 5-7). He will surely punish the arrogant false teachers who reject authority and approach spiritual realities with no more understanding than brute beasts (vv. 8-10). These false teachers follow the example of others in history whom God rejected and punished (v. 11) and are like specters, walking among them without life or the capacity to enrich those who do have life (vv. 12-13). Here Jude approvingly quotes a contemporary Jewish religious tract: The writer is correct in his vision of the Lord coming to judge ungodly sinners—like these false teachers who follow their own evil desires (vv. 14-16). Such persons are sure to infiltrate the church and try to divide the fellowship (vv. 17-19). The best way to resist them is to keep on growing in the faith, to live in God's love, and to show mercy and concern for those who doubt (vv. 20-23). Jude closes with a doxology that expresses his complete confidence that God is able to keep the true believer from falling and will present us "before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy" (vv. 24-25).

KEY VERSE

4: Two tests for orthodoxy.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Growth in faith and love is the best antidote to false teaching.

KEY CONCEPTS

Salvation. False teachers (1). False teachers (2). Judgment(1). Judgment (2). Eternal life. Shepherds.

Insight

"Secretly slipped in" (v. 4). False teachers do not announce themselves, but infiltrate the church by pretending to be Christians. Jude mentions two things that will identify them as time goes on: they will change the nature of grace and deny Jesus Christ. We change the nature of grace when we take God's promise of forgiveness as liberty to indulge in

immorality. We deny Jesus when we refuse to acknowledge Him as God as well as man.

Lost angels (v. 6). Many take this as a reference to angels who abandoned the spiritual realm and came to earth. Intertestamental literature shows Jewish writers interpreted Gen. 6:4 in this way. This interpretation is supported by v. 7, which alludes to a time when God's angels visited Sodom and Gomorrah and were viewed as objects for homosexual rape.

False teachers (v. 8). The link between false teachers and the men of Sodom is immorality: a pollution of "their own bodies" by sexual practices that in context include homosexuality.

"Michael" (v. 9). Michael is identified in Dan. 10:13, 21 and 12:1 as a powerful angel. He is also mentioned by name in Rev. 12:7. Jude's point is that if such a powerful being deferred to God to deal with Satan, how much more ought we human beings to remain humble in our weakness and defer to God too. But false teachers are arrogant. They have no more sense than a mouse who foolishly approaches the snake waiting to devour him.

"Wandering stars" (v. 13). Comets, meteors, and shooting stars were called "wandering stars" in the 1st century. Like the false teachers, they were of no value in guiding a navigator at sea.

"Enoch" (vv. 14-15). Jude quotes this Jewish writing not as an authority, but as a vivid contemporary description of a Day of Judgment which is substantiated fully in the O.T. Judgment is coming. Then the false teachers will receive their due—as will those whom they lead astray. But see v. 24.

"HOW TO DEAL WITH APOSTASY"

PURPOSE OF LETTER - VERSE 3

REASON OF LETTER - VERSE 4

ITS POSSIBILITY
ITS PERILS
ITS PUNISHMENT

Jude 1:1 "Renown" "submission"

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

"TO GUARD; HOLD FIRMLY"
"PRESERVED" - 1Pe 1:5 (Shielded)

Jude 1:2 "To JOIN TOGETHER"

Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. → COMPASSION; CALMNESS; CARE (of God)

✓ Jude 1:3

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you → "TO HASTEN; DESIRE EARNESTLY" (INVOLVES ACTION & DESIRE)

about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge → "POSSESSED IN COMMON" ZPT 1'

you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted → "STRIVE; AGONIZE" (USED OF GRECIAN GAMES)

to the saints. → "TO GIVE OVER INTO POWER OR USE; TO KEEP, USE, TAKE CARE OF MANAGE"

Jude 1:4

For certain men whose condemnation was written about → "WRITTEN OF BEFOREHAND; PLACARDED; SET FORTH"

long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are → "SINISTER" (Ga 2:4)

godless men, who change the grace of our God into a → "DESTITUTE OF REVERENTIAL AWE TOWARD GOD"

license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only (BOLDLY BLASPHEMOUS OF ANYTHING RELIGIOUS)

Sovereign and Lord. → { "ONE OF WHICH IS PUT IN THE PLACE OF ANOTHER"
"TO TRANSPOSE"

Jude 1:5

Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

THE FORMS OF APOSTASY --

1. ISRAEL - unbelief (Hb 3:19)
2. ANGELS - Rebellion (pride)
3. SoDOM - FORNICATION (IMMORALITY)

Jude 1:6

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

ZPE 2:4
15 14:12-15

THESE CAN BE PROVEN AS --

1. Verified examples
2. Various examples
3. Valid examples

Jude 1:7

In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer → "TO LIE EXPOSED" (MEAT FOR GUESTS; CORPSE FOR BURIAL)

"DISPLAY; EXHIBIT" (HELD UP TO VIEW AS A WARNING)

Jude 1:8

In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own → FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT
bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

VERSES 8-10

UNRESTRAINED -
(conduct, contempt, conversation)

VERSE 11

UNBRIDLED -
(ways, wishes, wills)

Jude 1:9

But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Jude 1:10

Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals--these are the very things that destroy them.

Jude 1:11

Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

→ SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (GE 4)
→ GREED (NU 22:7-13)
→ PRESUMPTION (REBELLION AGAINST DIVINELY CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY - NU 16:1-35)

Jude 1:12

These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm--shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted--twice dead.

12a - unsafe

12b - useless (disappointing; dead)

Jude 1:13

They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

13 - unstable (fickle; fleeing)

Jude 1:14

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones

14 - undone

Jude 1:15

to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

15 - ungodly

Jude 1:16

"one who discontentedly complains" - (used of the cooing of doves - not a loud outspoken dissatisfaction, but an undertone of muttering)
These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

16 - unrighteous

Jude 1:17

But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

Remember what was said about apostasy

Jude 1:18

They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires."

Be
Be
AWARE
ALERT

Jude 1:19

These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. (apo dia oros)

REALIZE the source of apostasy
→ dividers
debased
devoid

"one who draws a line through the church, and sets one part over against another" (to cause division or parties)

JUDE 3

Assertions:

- 1. There is the existence of a body of truth;*
- 2. "The faith" - Philippians 1:27*
- 3. That body of truth is complete*
- 4. No additions are needed*
- 5. It is authoritative*

"It is delivered"

- 1. Not a product of man*
- 2. Cf. Galatians 1:11; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Galatians 1:23
Ephesians 3:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:16,17*
- 3. Delivered "once" - full, complete, final - Hebrews 9:26,28*
- 4. The saints are custodians, or stewards*

"To Contend"

- 1. Capable of recognizing error and false teachers*
- 2. Must do something about it immediately*
- 3. False teaching and teachers not to be ignored - cf. the attitude
"what difference does it make?"*
- 4. Right and obligation to warn the brethren; to contend for
the faith*
- 5. He was plain, pointed and precise in discussing sins and
emphasizing God's punishment of the wicked*

✓ Jude 1:20

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

→ "To GIVE CONSTANT INCREASE"

Jude 1:21

Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

VERSES 20, 21 REMAIN STEADFAST IN SPITE OF APOSTASY

By → Personal edification
Praying earnestly
Patiently enduring

Jude 1:22

Be merciful to those who doubt;

Jude 1:23

snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear--hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

VERSES 22, 23 REACH OUT TO SERVE TO THE

Doubters
Determined
Defiled

Jude 1:24

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--

→ "TO SIN ; TO MAKE A MISTAKE"
(to be sure - footed as a horse that does not stumble)

Jude 1:25

to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Gal 1:11

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up.

1 Cor 2:10

but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

1 Cor 2:11

For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

1 Cor 2:12

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

1 Cor 2:13

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

Gal 1:23

They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."

Eph 3:1

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles--

Eph 3:2

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you,

Eph 3:3

that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

Eph 3:4

In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

Eph 3:5

which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

2 Tim 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

2 Tim 3:17

so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Heb 9:26

Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Heb 9:28

so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.