

1 John 1

Author

The Apostle John is the author, according to numerous statements of Christian writers in the early second century and according to numerous similarities with his other books.

Readers

A “general” epistle, not addressed just to one congregation, but to all Christians in all centuries; probably it was delivered at Ephesus, possibly to Gentile converts (see *5:21* and *3 John 4*).

Date

Uncertain, but probably very late in the First Century, due to the material in *1 John* that refutes Gnosticism

-According to Guy N. Woods, possibly between 90-94 AD (shortly before the bitter persecution which was started under Emperor Domitian).

Theme

The main message is the joy and happiness we should have concerning Christian love; it is a letter of great joy

-However, interspersed with these comments are statements refuting the two prominent false doctrines of John’s day:

-The denial of Christ’s humanity by the Gnostics (*1:1-3*)

-The denial of Christ’s deity, by the unbelieving Jews (*2:22*)

Notice how John states his purposes in this letter:

-*1:4* – that our joy may be made complete

-*2:1* – that you may not sin

-*2:26* – concerning those who are trying to deceive you

-*5:13* – that you may know that you have eternal life

In all his writings, John tends to bring out certain contrasts:

-life and death

-light and darkness

-children of God and children of the devil

-love of God and love the world

-righteousness and unrighteousness

-Christ and anti-Christ

This tendency is very evident in the letter of *1 John*

Notice some of the similarities between the *Gospel of John* and *1 John*:

1 John 1.1 – John 1.1

1.2 – John 3.2

1.1 – John 1.1

1.6 – John 8.12

2.3 – John 14.15

2.5 – John 14.21

2.6 – John 15.5

2.8 – John 13.34

2.25 – John 17.2

Noel Meredith, *Spiritual Sword Lectures, 1976*, “1 John”:

First John was written by the inspired apostle John, probably between AD 90-95, from Ephesus

- The book was written to Christians, many of whom are second generation Christians, so they needed encouragement to have a strong personal conviction to the faith
- The Christians to whom John wrote were beset with the problems of lack of brotherly love, spiritual laxity, internal dissension, lessening of steadfastness in fellowship, the seductions of worldliness, and Gnosticism...
- Gnosticism was a false speculative philosophy.

Under such conditions the presence of false teachers created a powerful danger and was the immediate occasion for the writing of the epistle

- The false teachers are called liars, seducers, false prophets, deceivers, and antichrists
- Some sought to reinterpret their faith ‘in terms of modern thought’
- Such an attitude on the part of people today is still a source of much confusion and false doctrine
- The strong pull of the pleasures of sin and worldliness were everywhere
- So the false teachers were seeking to destroy both the faith and the morals of the Christians
- John thus writes to refute the false teachings which were prevalent and to establish them in the one faith and moral purity

1 John 1

Commentary used: *Gospel Advocate NT Commentary (Peter, John, Jude)*, Guy N. Woods

-What do we know about John?

-What books in the New Testament did John write? *Gospel of John, 1-2-3 John, Revelation* – about one-fifth (20%) of the New Testament

-We usually don’t consider John to be major writer of the New Testament, but he was

-Was John full of pride over his writing ability? No, his name is never mentioned in his books, except in *Revelation* (5 times there)

-What kind of writer was John? Very thoughtful and deep, with very simple words

-What do we know about John as a person? He came from rich family: his father Zebedee had hired servants (*Mark 1.20, Luke 5.10*)

-Mother: Salome (wealthy, supported Christ, had “substance”)

-Who was John’s brother? James (*Matthew 4.21*)

-Lived at Bethsaida – *Luke 5.10, John 1.44*

-What happened to him? Killed by Herod – *Acts 12.2*

-John had his own home – *John 19.27*

-At the crucifixion, John was personally acquainted with the high priest – *John 18.15*

-What else happened to John at the crucifixion? He was given charge of Mary

-Do we see John in Acts? Yes, being persecuted along with Peter

-Perhaps the greatest honor that John received in this life was in being given the writing of *Revelation* and thus to close the New Testament Scriptures

(*Revelation 22.21*) *The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

-In other words, the word of God was completed by John

Two problems that John had to deal with:

1. The original enthusiasm of the church had died down

- Christianity had become a thing of habit and tradition to come Christians
- The church had become a burden to some
- Also, Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.
- What effect would this have had on Jewish converts?** Maybe God doesn't love his people anymore (so this produced a loss of enthusiasm)

2. But another great danger: Gnosticism - from Greek word *gnosko* – meaning: *I know*

- Basic Gnostic belief: only spirit was good, all matter was evil
- How would that teaching conflict with Christians?** The coming (incarnation) of Jesus Christ would have been impossible
- In other words, God would never be found in a fleshly form - it would have been below his dignity
- Therefore, the Gnostics made a distinction between Jesus and Christ
- Gnostics: Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the dove was the spirit of Christ, which entered Jesus and stayed until the crucifixion
- Then Christ left and went back to heaven and didn't go through pain and agony of crucifixion
- Jesus (the man) therefore died on the cross, but Christ (the Son of God) escaped to heaven during the crucifixion
- Lastly, many Gnostics believed that it did not matter what the body did, as long as the spirit was pure, so the body could sin all it wanted to
- Gnostics were also "antinomians" = against the idea of law under Jesus Christ
- Why is the philosophy dangerous?** It meant our actions do not count - **Read 2 Corinthians 5.10**
- The modern day version of Gnosticism is the Christian Science Church
- They generally do not believe in going to medical doctors, since it is only the soul (spirit) that is sick, and if the soul can be healed, that will take care of the disease of the body
- So they go their "practitioners of spiritual healing"

Date for the book:

- The book of *1 John* was probably written in 90's A.D.
- John was at Ephesus
- The book was probably written to be circulated around the congregations in Asia Minor
- It is not a traditional letter (no greetings, etc. - more like a sermon in written form)

1 John 1.1-4 - Prologue

V1 – Wonder why there are no words of greetings? John wanted to get right to the subject

- Notice: His first verse is a direct, frontal attack on the Gnostics
- **In what way does he attack the Gnostics in v 1?** Jesus was only phantom, a ghost
- Notice the order of the verbs: *heard, seen, beheld, hands handled* – progression to make it clear – no mistake

V1a – "*What was from the beginning*" – Does this remind you of another verse in the Bible?

John 1.1 - **Read John 1.1-4**

- John: Jesus was not a natural-born man, but was already in existence at the beginning

V2 – Meaning of "manifested?" Made known

- In other words, not just for a select group of people

V 3– **When do we have fellowship with each other?** When we also have fellowship with God the Father and his son Jesus Christ

V 4– Notice the emphasis on joy in believing what is right

1 John 1.5-10

V 5– Notice the distinction between darkness and light

V 6– The conclusion from above statement

-If we walk in darkness, we cannot have fellowship with God

-**What did John call those who lived in wickedness and claimed to be Christians?** Liars

-**Apostle of love?** To "love" means to speak the truth to people

V 7 – **What do we have to do to have real fellowship with God?** Walk in light

-**Meaning?** Do the best we can at the Christian way of life

-**When we walk in light, what are the two results?** Fellowship with one another and blood of Jesus (not just Christ) cleanses us of all sin

-**Implications of this verse (tremendous)?**

We must walk in light – not passive

-**If** – meaning that we can cease to walk in light

-We don't have to perfect, because the blood of Jesus still has the power to cleanse us

-Sometimes we get the question: Once we are baptized and then commit a sin, do we have to be baptized again? No, as long as we are "walking in the light" (doing the best we can, with a penitent heart), we are forgiven

-Guy N. Woods has said that it is like the windshield wipers on a car constantly removing the rain from the windshield

-As long as we are striving to please God, those wipers keep taking the rain away

V 8 – A direct attack on Gnostics

-**Describe person who says that he has no sin?** Deceived, has no truth

-**Does this happen today?** Yes, many people see no need to obey the gospel because they don't see themselves as sinners

V 9 – **Different if John had said, "If we say that we have sinned ..."? Yes** – "confess" implies admission of guilt and sorrow

-**Whom do we confess our sins to?** God (Christ)

-Christ is our mediator between us and God, and to the person we have offended

V 10 – John is very emphatic here – we have all sinned

Great truth from 1 John 1:

"The shot across the bow" – this Navy term means "surrender!" – That was John's message to the false teachers and the Gnostics!

-What a powerful piece of writing from the very beginning!

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1 John 2

1 John 2.1-6

V1 – Why does he use phrase “my little children”? A term of endearment

-John was very old at this time (probably in his 90’s)

-We don’t mind if older people call us “young people”

-**What were “these things?”** All in *Ch. 1*

-**What was the purpose of John in 1 John?** To try to get the First Century Christians to stop sinning (Christ’s goal for us)

-**Is that possible?** No

-**Does that mean that our situation is hopeless?** No

-**Why is it not hopeless?** Because we have an “advocate” with the Father

-Advocate: an attorney (Australia) – someone who pleads the case of someone else (a public defender)

-When we have to testify at a trial to the moral life of fellow Christian, we are serving as an advocate or “a Christian witness”

-Sometimes, a famous person (mayor, government, movie star, etc.) will testify at a trial on behalf of someone else (it usually creates quite a stir)

-**First job of Jesus?** To take up our case and to “testify” on our behalf

V2 – Propitiation = (dictionary) – an atoning sacrifice, an appeasement, conciliation

-When we should have died for our sins, Jesus died in our place

-**For whose sins did Christ die?** Whole world

-**Will the whole world therefore be saved?** No

-**Why not?** We must accept the terms of pardon

V3 – Notice use of word “know”

-Today, many people think that they know God by “feeling” him in their hearts, getting very emotional, etc.

-**But how did John say that we could “know” God?** By obeying him – obedience is the key
Read Matthew 7.21-23, John 14.15, 2 Corinthians 5.10, Titus 1.16

-**What is the application here to the Gnostics?** They said that their actions didn’t count, since the body meant nothing – application today: it refutes the Once Saved Always Saved doctrine

V4 – John did not back down a bit

-**How did John attack Gnostics here?** Major attack – they are liars (strong language)

V5 – **Who is really the one who loves God?** The one who keeps the word of God

-John will not turn loose of this issue – he is determined to keep on attacking Gnosticism until it is dead

V6 – **One way to know if we are abiding in God?** Walking as he walked

-We study four gospels and try to live as Christ lived (our actions do count)

1 John 2.7-11

V 7 – John’s attitude is always one of love

-“*Speaking the truth in love*” (Ephesians 4.15)

-**Is what he is about to say new or old?** Old - Read Leviticus 19.18 and John 13.34-35

-“*From the beginning*” – beginning of Christian faith and even back into the Old Testament

-God has always wanted us to love one another

V 8 – In some sense this would be a “new” commandment – **How?** A new application

-**Explain?** Darkness passing away...

Darkness: superstition, ignorance, hate – passing away due to the spread of Christianity

V 9 – **The new application?** If we claim to be Christians and hate one another, we are still in darkness

-**Application?** Gnostics were dividing Christians and bringing about hate among Christians

V 10 –**If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, what will our conduct be like?** No cause for stumbling

V 11 – **How did John describe the one who hated his brother?** Walking in darkness

-**How can darkness blind a person’s eyes?**

-**Applications?** Those with “superior knowledge” were really showing hate for fellow Christians

1 John 2.12-14 – Words of encouragement

V 12 – **Many** questions have been raised about these three verses

[Many very interesting Greek questions (two different words for *children* and also a shift in tenses)]

-**Possible interpretation of *children, young men, fathers?*** Three levels of spiritual development in the church

-Children = new converts, young men = older, fathers = those who are spiritually mature

-**What is John’s message to “*children*”?** Sins forgiven

-**To fathers?** They have known Christ from the beginning

-**To young men?** Have overcome the evil one

V 13b – John starts cycle again

-**Why had children been forgiven of their sins (v 12)?** V 13b – because they knew God the Father

V 14 – **Fathers?** Have known Christ from the beginning

-**Young men complimented?** Have overcome evil one

-The young men were strong because word of God was in them

1 John 2.15-17

V 15 –**What did John mean by “*world*”?** Evil in life - Read Romans 12.2

-Remember *John 3.16* – *God so loved the world...*

V 16 – Three ways the world tempts us?

1. Lust of flesh – things which appeal to senses (feel good)
 2. Lust of eyes – things that look good
 3. Boastful pride of life – things that make us full of pride
- Eve and fruit: good to eat, delight to eyes, would make her wise - *Genesis 3.6*
 - Three temptations of Jesus (change stone to bread, throw self off the temple, shown all the kingdoms of the world) – Satan tempts us in one or two or all three ways

V 17 – What is the problem with giving in to temptations of Satan? The world is passing away: a new car rusts, house decays, awards, etc., all fade away

- What will give us eternal results?** Doing the will of God – we will abide forever
- Good advice for us all to take and apply

1 John 2.18-24

V 18-24 – very important – much discussion about the anti-Christ today

- General Premillennial theory today (dispensational) = U.S. of Europe will come from Common Market (European Union) – headed by “anti-Christ” who will attack and persecute Christians
- The leader of forces of evil in the battle of Armageddon will be the "Anti-Christ"

V 18 – Explain “last hour”? Possible John was near death (or) the Christian age – referred to as “last days”

- This shows a sense of urgency in John’s voice
- The danger from Gnostics was severe and imminent
- In other words, you must take action against Gnostics now
- When had they heard of anti-Christ before?** Apparently John had written about this danger before
- How many anti-Christ were there?** Many
- Implications for premillennialism: it destroys it as a theory
- Not one anti-Christ, but many
- Also, not in our time, but in John’s day

V 19 – Some tragic statements

- What was the source of these false teachers?** From the church itself
- We can be attacked from within and from without
- From within is more serious and can be deadly to a congregation

V 20 – The Christians had received an “anointing” of Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians 12.10* – distinguishing the spirits)

- What was John saying?** They could use the Holy Spirit to tell who was a false teacher and who wasn't

V 21 – The Christians had the “truth” – they could tell that the Gnostics were wrong

V 22 – **What is the definition of anti-Christ?** Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ
-Today many claim that Jesus was just a human being, not God in flesh
-Anti-Christ = to deny deity of Jesus
-This would include most Jews today and all others who accept "Jesus," but not "Christ" (the literal Son of God)

V 23 – We are to confess Jesus as Son of God

V 24 – This was encouragement for them to remember all they had been taught as Christians to remain faithful
-“Anti-Christ” – *1 John 2.18,22, 4.3, 2 John 7*

1 John 2.25-29 – Beautiful summary for Christians

V 25 – **God’s promise and our goal?** Eternal life

V 26 – **Purpose of this verse?** To warn Christians about those who were trying to deceive them (their goal)

V 27 – A reference to special gift of Holy Spirit

V 28 – Beautiful and deep thought

-**What should our attitude be toward Jesus Christ?** Not one of shrinking away in shame
-If we are afraid of Jesus Christ, we should get our lives straight today

V 29 – We are to practice righteousness

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1 John 3

1 John 3.1-10

V1 – John shifts his theme more to the characteristics of love (but the Gnostic threat is always in mind)

-**What are we known as Christians?** Children of God

-**What caused us to be called “children of God”?** God adopted us because of love that he had for us

-John – *v 1b* – this title is correct – we are not just “children of God” in name

-**Why doesn’t the world recognize us?** Because the world never knew God, so Christians are from the downtrodden in the world

V2 – **Does John know what we will be like with our new bodies?** No

-Interesting – not all is revealed – some surprises are left for us to discover in heaven

-**But what did John know?** We will be like God (Jesus) – we will see him as he is

V3 – **What hope?** Of seeing Jesus

-**How will we see Jesus?** By purifying ourselves

V4 – Again dealing with Gnostics

-**What does it mean to “practice” sin?** To violate the law of God

-In other words, all sin is terrible – we shouldn’t “wink” at some sins and say, “Well, everybody is human” – Examples: shoplifting, getting drunk, using drugs

-**Definition of sin?** A violation of God’s law

V5 – **Purpose of Jesus’ coming?** To take sins away

V6 – **Who does not sin today?** One who abides in Jesus

-Remember *1 John 1.7* – *If we walk in the light...*

-**In what sense do we not sin?** We are forgiven daily if we are walking in the light

V7 – **Application to Gnostics?** What the body does really counts!

V8 – We all sin from time to time, but we are not to practice sin

-**What does John say about person who practices sin?** He is from the devil

V9 – Remember: all great people in the Bible had lapses into sin – Abraham, David, Peter, but they confessed their sin and asked for forgiveness

-To have to be perfect is a terrifying thought

-John: The child of God will not be a consistent and deliberate sinner – we will work on overcoming our sins; we won’t practice them

V10 – Tests for child of God: not practicing sin and loving our fellow Christians

V11 – More examples of loving each other

V 12 – Frequently asked questions? Why was Cain’s sacrifice rejected and Abel’s accepted?

-Read Hebrews 11.4

-Cain had a wicked attitude and heart

-Abel was righteous and had a pure heart

-V 12 – Cain hated Abel because Cain’s deeds were evil

-Evil people will hate good people, because good people make evil people feel guilty

1 John 3.13-24

V 13 – What should we not be surprised about? If the world hates us - **Read John 15.17-19**

-V 13: only place in *1 John* where he refers to his readers as “brethren” – elsewhere: children, etc.

-Significance? Discussion of brotherly love

V 14 – Explain? “Passing from death into life” = becoming a Christian (being baptized)

-Sign of our Christian faith? Love for one another

-The final and greatest test of our Christian faith: loving one another in the church

-Learning to deal with problems without having the church explode

V 15 – Why is hatred the same as murder? People would commit murder if the opportunity came up

-For example, Cain hated his brother first, then killed him

-Eternal destination for murderers? They will be lost, if they do not repent (Rev. 21.8)

-Have any murderers ever been saved? Yes, the Apostle Paul and also Jeffrey Dahmer

-We must guard our hearts and not let hatred build up against someone (an opportunity to kill that person may arise)

V 16 – What example of love do we have to guide us? Jesus’ laying down his life for us (*John 10.11, 17-18, John 15.12-13*)

-Notice the contrast between Jesus and Cain – one killed his brother – the other died for his brothers and sisters

-What does John say we should be willing to do if necessary? Lay down our lives for fellow Christians

V 17 – How often are we asked to lay down our lives for fellow Christians? Hardly ever

-But more practical application? Brother in need

-Sometimes it is hard to get fellow Christians to accept help – it is often refused

-Great tact and decorum must be used (as in helping their children, etc.)

-If a family is too embarrassed to ask the church for money, the church can have a "pound party"

-Families bring a pound of sugar, a pound of flour, etc.

-John: Help one another with food and other necessities

V 18 – What kind of love must we have? In deed (another jab at the Gnostics)

V 19 – Test to see if we are in truth? The degree of our love for the brethren

V 20 – Often people feel guilty about things that God has forgiven them for
-People feel guilty that they are not perfect
-John: Do the best you can and let the grace of God cover your imperfections

V 21 – When our hearts (consciences) are properly trained, we have confidence before God

V 22 – **Under what circumstances are our prayers answered?**

1. We keep his commandments,
 2. We do the things that are pleasing in his sight
- As Christians, we will not ask for things that we know are contrary to God's will

V 23 – Two themes of John are really one: Jesus was the Christ (contrary to what the Gnostics were teaching) and we are to love one another

V 24 – Summary

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1 John 4

1 John 4.1-6

V1 – Use of “beloved”? Shows the urgency of the message – we can feel the urgency in John’s voice

-**Have there always been false teachers among God’s people? Read Deuteronomy 13.1-5** -

They were to receive the death penalty

-Sometimes people are really surprised when they see false teachers and false doctrines in the church

-It really shouldn’t be that shocking

-Old Testament: Balaam and other false prophets in *1-2 Kings* and *1-2 Chronicles*

-**What are we to do concerning prophets or teachers who may come our way?** Test them!

-**Meaning?** Ask them questions about their beliefs

-The faithful ones will not mind (they will be happy to answer); the false teachers are the ones who will get upset

-**How many false prophets should we expect?** Many

-**Who was to test teachers?** Everyone (not just elders, deacons, preachers, etc.)

V2 – What specific test did John recommend? “Did Jesus come in the flesh?”

-**What false doctrine was John searching for in v 2?** Gnostics

-John didn’t beat around the bush

-He went straight after the major false doctrine of his day

-The Gnostics would be quickly identified

-Today, we should ask about the major false doctrines of our day (marriage-divorce-remarriage, authority of elders (Heb. 13.17), instrumental music in worship, etc.)

V3 – If a person could not state that Jesus came in the flesh, what about that person? He was an “Anti-Christ”

-Notice again that anti-Christ’s were in the world then

-All false teachers are anti-Christ’s

-They may teach some doctrines that are true, but if they believe in a false doctrine, they are still anti-Christ’s

V4 – Why did John say, “You are from God...”? To build up their confidence and to indicate that the Gnostics were not from God

-**If the Gnostics were not from God, who were they from?** Satan

-It was the saints vs. the false teachers (no middle ground)

-**Why the second part of v 4?** The church can survive

-It is not written in stone that false teachers will take over church – but if we are faithful, God will be on our side

V5 – How do false teachers speak? As the world speaks

-**How does world speak?** Smooth things, exciting things, politically correct words, etc.

-**Is it the same today or different?** The same

-TV evangelists say what people want to hear and then beg for money

-Elijah in *1 Kings 18.17* – Ahab: “*Is this you, you troubler of Israel?*”

V 6 – Who would godly people listen to? John, etc. **Read 1 Kings 22.8** (Micaiah)

1 John 4.7-14 – The love of God

V 7-11 – Notice how John continues to interweave the two concepts of opposing false doctrine and loving our fellow Christians and God
-Our generation has overlooked that relationship

V 7 – One Bible commentator said: “Love is like the wind – we can’t see it, but we can see its effects”
-**Where did the concept of love come from?** God
-Guy N. Woods: “Love is the one characteristic of the Christian religion which it is impossible to counterfeit”
-Wicked people do not have love

V 8 – Is "God" simply the concept of love? No, this is just one of God’s characteristics (God is light – 1.5)
-**How did God show his love before Christ came to earth?** The beautiful creation, the Old Testament
-He gave free will and his providence to all humans

V 9 – In New Testament, how was love of God shown? In sacrifice of God’s son
-**Explain “his only begotten son”?** Only literal son of God to be born in the flesh (another attack on the Gnostics)

V 10 – Who loved first – us or God? God
-Even before we are born, God saw us in the womb (*Psalms 139*)
-**Greatest sign of his love?** Sending his son to be sacrifice for our sins

V 11 – Conclusion based on God’s love? We should love one another
-**Why?** God loved us while we were imperfect – we can love one another with our imperfections

V 12 – Explain? No one has beheld God (the Father) – no one can fathom his divine nature
-Jesus has revealed the will of God (and his nature)
-**When does God abide in us?** When we love one another

V 13 – Read Galatians 5.22-23 - Fruit of the spirit
-**The first fruit of spirit?** Love
(The Gnostics must have said a lot about love, but they twisted its meaning)

V 14 – John reaffirms his testimony that Jesus did come into the world

1 John 4.15-21

V 15 – Lest we misunderstand John

-All this talk about loving one another might make some think that we can ignore false doctrine and just “love” one another – Not so

-**Who abides in God?** Only those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God (another attack on the Gnostics)

V 16 – Notice we come to know John’s thoughts that God is love

V 17 – John: If we have the proper understanding of love, then the Day of Judgment will be no problem for us

-Some people (even Christians) are terrified of Day of Judgment

-Love will dispel that terror

V 18 – **What does perfect love do?** Casts out fear

-Many, many times people obey out of fear of being lost - **Read 2 Corinthians 5.11**

-A legitimate fear

-**But what should happen to us as we mature as Christians?** The fear of God changes to love of God

-**We do this with our earthly parents, don’t we?**

-First is fear, but later love

-A great principle is set forth here

V 19 – **Our love is a response to _____?** God’s love

V 20 – **What is wrong with loving God and hating your brother or sister?** We can’t see God, but we can see our brothers and sisters

Notice that John uses word “liar” again

V 21 – A commandment that we love one another in the church

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1 John 5

1 John 5.1-12

V1 – Just saying that we have been born again really means nothing

-**What was the test, according to John?** To believe that Jesus is Christ and was born of God

-**If we love somebody, what will be our attitude toward his child?** We will love him

V2 – Love is proven when we observe God’s commandments

-A parent will ask his son to take the trash out – that is a test of love

V3–**But what is wrong with above illustration when it comes to God’s commandments?** They are not burdensome

-Some people will not obey the gospel because they say they can’t live the Christian way of life (as if it is a great burden and filled with problems)

-But just the opposite is true

-**What are some of the joys that come from the Christian way of life?** Fellowship, peace of mind, a non-destructive lifestyle, etc.

-We are all happier as Christians than we would be if we were not Christians

-A very important passage

V4– **What allows us to overcome the world?** Our faith

V5– **What is the nature of our faith?** We believe in Jesus Christ

-John is not afraid to keep hammering away at the issue that was tearing up the congregations of his day

V6– **How did John identify Jesus here?** The one who came by water and blood

-**What is “water” a reference to?** The baptism of Jesus (*Matthew 3.15*)

-**Blood?** His death on the cross

-Those who do not believe in water baptism sometimes say that the water here is water that came from side of Jesus at the crucifixion (*John 19.34*).

-**Answer?** *John 19.34* – blood came first, then water

-John seems to be taking this in historical order

-He emphasizes on length of Jesus’ ministry, from his baptism to his death on the cross

-Remember that Gnostics believed that spirit of Christ left Jesus just before crucifixion

-John is still attacking the Gnostics – Jesus endured the crucifixion

V7 – The Holy Spirit confirms this through the Word

V8 – *1 John 5.7* – considered an uninspired statement that crept into the text of *1 John*

-None of early manuscripts had this verse

-The earliest manuscript was from the fifteenth century

-Bro. Woods: This seems to have been a scribe's note in the margin, which later got put into the text

Read *Gospel Advocate NT Commentary (Peter, John, Jude)*, p. 326, Guy N. Woods

-Proof of Jesus' deity: his baptism (dove and voice), his death, and the Holy Spirit

V 9 – We believe human witnesses, don't we? John: "Who are you going to believe?"

-The witness of God is greater

V 10 – The one who believes in Jesus as the Son of God has the indwelling of Holy Spirit

-To disbelieve in Jesus makes God a liar

-Because God said Jesus was His son (at the baptism of Jesus and on the Mount of Transfiguration)

V 11 – What has God promised us? Eternal life from his son

V 12 – What is John saying about the Gnostics? They are still lost

1 John 5.13-17

V 13 – A great passage

-In what sense do we "have" eternal life now? In prospect, not in reality

-We can lose eternal life - **Read 2 Timothy 2.16-18**

-Two men had "gone astray" (Christians had fallen from grace, according to *Galatians 5.4*)

-The believer may cease to believe

V 14 – What confidence do we have as Christians in prayer? He will hear our prayers when we ask according to his will

-Example of asking for things contrary to his will? Prayers with selfish motives

V 15 – Notice use of word "know"

-If God hears us, what else do we know? That God will answer our prayers

V 16 – Connections with previous verse? We must not pray for something "unscriptural"

[Guy N. Woods has three and a half pages on this one verse, with a long discussion of suicide]

-What is a sin leading to death? A sin that a person does not repent of (willful sin, with no repentance) and no desire to change

-Read **Jeremiah 7.16, 11.14**

-Why should we not pray for that person? That person cannot get forgiveness without repentance

-Read **Jeremiah 14.11-12**

-Therefore don't pray for unrepentant sinners to be forgiven

V 17 – Sin not leading to death? A sin that we ask forgiveness for

1 John 5.18-21 – Concluding remarks, a summary of everything

V 18 – Notice use of "know" in v 18-21 – four times – three things John knew

-A Christian does not sin

-Once saved always saved? No, we can reject God

V 19 – We are born of God, even in evil world

V 20 – Jesus has come and has given us understanding and knowledge

-**What attacks on the Gnostics did John make in v 18-20?** End of v 20

V 21 – **What is an idol?** Anything people worship in place of God

-Probably John was referring to how we can make other people idols (we follow them too closely)

-In other words, don't idolize the Gnostics

Urge the class members to buy a copy of Guy N. Woods' commentary

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