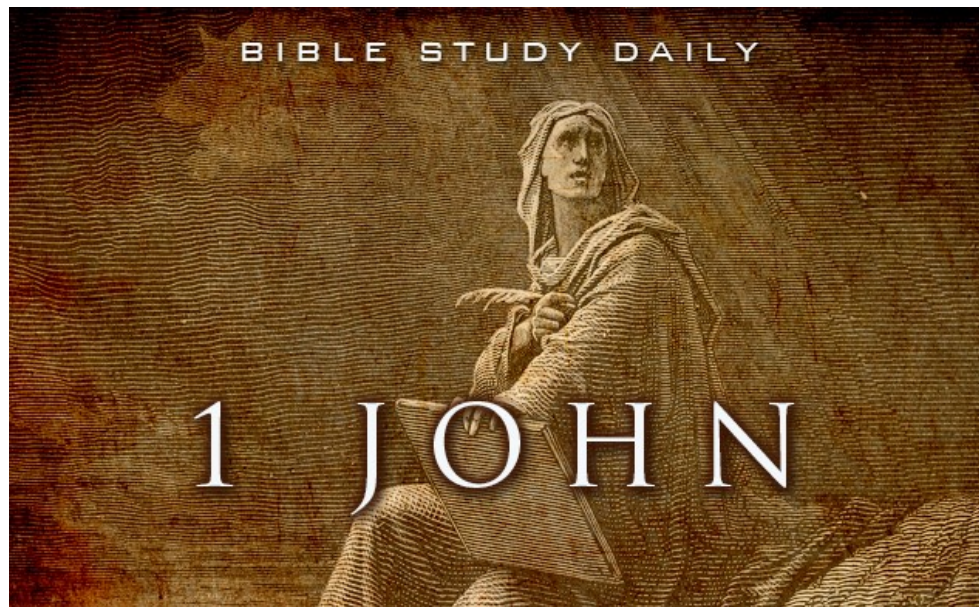




# BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of 1 John as well as my study notes for the book.

## Name

The title “1 John ” comes from John, the Son of Zebedee, and the author of the Gospel of John.

## Author

Although John's name does not appear in the letter, it is traditionally ascribed to him. The author claims to be an eyewitness to the incarnate life of Jesus (1:1-2), and the only John that fits that criteria is John, the Son of Zebedee.

External evidence comes from a number of early church fathers who ascribe authorship to John, including: Polycarp, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and Dionysius.

## Genre

General Epistle

## Literary Form

Early church fathers referred to 1 John as a letter, but it does not bear the usual markers of a 1st century letter (Paul's letters are good examples). It might be best understood as a treatise or homily (sermon).

## Time Frame

There are some scholars who believe John's three letters (1, 2, & 3 John) were written in the early A.D. 60's. before the Roman destruction in A.D. 70. However, scholarly consensus is the letters were written from Ephesus sometime between A.D. 80-95.

## Emphasis

There are four main points of emphasis in the letter:

1. A portion of the letter is focused on encouraging the believers,
2. A portion is an exhortation to avoid sin.
3. A portion is a warning against false teachers (Gnostics).
4. A portion is an affirmation of the promise of eternal life.

Gnosticism had become popular during the time of John's writing.



Gnostics claimed to be Christians with additional knowledge or revelation.

## Outline

- The person of Christ (1:1-4)
- The lifestyle of the believer (1:5-2:14)
- The believer in the World (2:15-27)
- The marks of a child of God (2:28-4:21)
- Closing exhortation (5:1-21)

# What I Noticed Today (1 John 1-3)

## 1 John 1

In verses 1-4 a prologue of the incarnation of Christ:

- God's Son was from the beginning.
- He was heard, seen, and touched by the apostles.
- Who gives eternal life.
- We testify to the eternal life that was with the Father has been revealed to us.
- So that you may also have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.
- The purpose of John writing this letter is so that our joy might be complete.

## 1 John 1:5-2:12

John discusses the lifestyle of the believer in fellowship with God.


In verses 5-10 John relays a message from Him (Jesus):

- God is light, in Him there is no darkness.
- We cannot have fellowship with Him, yet walk in darkness. One cannot claim fellowship with God while disobeying Him. The person who does this is lying and not practicing the truth.
- But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and Jesus cleanses us from all sin.
- If we say we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- If we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us.
- If we say we have no sin, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

## 1 John 2

- I write this so you will not sin.
- But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate to the Father in Jesus.
- Jesus is the propitiation of our sins, even the whole world.

**Note:** "Propitiation" means to turn away the wrath of God. Jesus turned away the wrath of God on our behalf through his atoning death on the cross.



This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him:

- By keeping His commands
- The one who says he knows God, but doesn't keep His commands is a liar.
- The one who keeps His commands has the love of God perfected in him.
- The one who says he remains in Him should walk as He (Jesus) walked.
- The command you should follow is an old command. It is the message you have heard (to love one another). Jesus called the command new which is true in Him (Jesus) and you.
- Darkness is passing away and the true light is shining.

**Note:** Sin is characterized by "darkness." "True light" is the revelation of God to man.

- Anyone who says he is in the light but hates his brother lives in darkness.
- The one who loves his brother lives in light and does not stumble.
- But the one who hates his brother walks in darkness and doesn't know where he is going, because darkness has blinded him.

**Note:** Christians who hate fellow Christians are lost, they have no sense of direction because they are spiritually blind.

In verses 12-28 John explains the purpose of the letter:

- I am writing to you little children because your sins are forgiven by Jesus, and you have come to know the Father.
- I am writing to you fathers because you have come to know God, and the One who is from the beginning.
- I am writing to you young men because you have victory over the evil one (Satan). God's Word remains in you and you have victory over the evil one.

**Note:** In context it does not make sense to interpret John's divisions of children, fathers, and young men as specific age groups, or even as levels of spiritual maturity. John is speaking to all Christians (all have been forgiven their sins). We begin as God's children when we accept Christ. Fathers are those who have known the Lord for a long time and developed a deep relationship with Him. Young men have God's Word in them which enables them to fight against evil.

- John continues warning them not to love the world and the things of the world. If you love the world the love of the Father is not in you.
  - The world is lust of the flesh, eyes, and pride. These are not of the Father, but of the world.
  - The lust of the world is passing away, but the one who does God's

will remain forever.

- In the last hour the Antichrist will come. Even now many antichrists have come. They went out from us (Christian churches), but did not belong to us, for if they had they would have remained. They would not have committed heresy if they were true believers.
- But you have the Holy Spirit and knowledge. You have the truth.
- The liar is the one who denies Jesus as Messiah. This one is the antichrist; the one who denies the Father and the Son.

**Note:** If you deny the Son as Messiah, you are also denying God the Father who sent Him.


- No one who denies the Father can have the Son.
- He who confesses the Son has the Father as well.
- If what you heard in the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father.
- This is the promise of eternal life that He (Jesus) made us.
- The anointing (Holy Spirit) you received from Him (Jesus) remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you (because you have the Holy Spirit to teach you).
- Just as He taught you remain in Him.
- Remain in Him so that when He appears we may have boldness and not be ashamed at His coming.

## 1 John 3

In verses 2:29-3:24 John discusses the righteousness, love, and confidence that are marks of those in Christian fellowship.

- Everyone who does right has been born in Him.
- The Father loves us and calls us His children.
- The reason the world doesn't understand us is they don't know Him.
- What we will be as God's children has not yet been revealed. Believers will be transformed because we will see God as He is.
- Everyone who has this hope purifies themselves just as He is pure.
- Everyone who sins breaks the law.
- He (Jesus) was revealed so that He might take away sin, because there is no sin in Him.
- Everyone who remains in Him does not sin, everyone who sins has not seen Him or known Him.

**Note:** John understands believers sin (2:1), but they receive



forgiveness of sin through Jesus' death (1:7) when they confess their sins becoming believers (1:9). John seems to be suggesting that while the believer still sins, they do not sin habitually. Those who sin habitually are false believers (2:23).

- Let no one deceive you!

**Note:** Apparently there were those who were confusing people as to what was sin and what was not (the antichrists mentioned previously).

- He who does what is righteous is righteous, just as Jesus is righteous.
- The one who sins is of the Devil, for the Devil sinned from the beginning.
- The Son of God was revealed to destroy the Devil's works.
- Everyone born of God does not sin because His seed (His nature) is in him.
- This is how God's children and the Devil's children are made known.

**Note:** Again, John is not suggesting that the believer never sins. He is saying a believer does not live in habitual sin because they have the divine nature (a new identity in Christ).


In verses 10b-15 John discusses the command for Christians to love one another:

- Whoever does not do right is not of God.
- Especially the one who does not love his brother.
- This is the message you have heard from the beginning.
- Unlike Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother.
- Cain murdered his brother because his works were evil, and his brother's works were righteous.
- Do not be surprised if the world hates you
- We know we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers.
- The one who does not love remains in death (unsaved).
- Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know no murderer has eternal life residing (or abiding) in him.

**Note:** These verses (14-15) are difficult to interpret. John seems to be suggesting that hatred of one brother to another is the moral equivalent of murder. You cannot have Christ abiding in you and feel true hatred toward a brother in Christ.

In verses 16-24 John describes true Christian love:

- We know true love through the example of Jesus who laid down His life for us.

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- In the same way we should love our brothers and lay down our lives for them.
  - If anyone has worldly goods and closes his eyes to a brother's need, can God's love reside in him?
  - We must not love in word or speech, but in action.
  - This is how we know we belong to God.
  - Even if your heart condemns you (deceives you), God knows our conscience.
  - If our conscience doesn't condemn us, we can have confidence before God.
  - We can ask whatever we want of God in prayer and receive that which is in God's will (5:14-15).
  - This is the command: believe in Jesus Christ and love one another as He commanded us.
  - The one who keeps His commands remains in Him and He in us through the Holy Spirit.

**Note:** Verse 24 is the first of six references to the Holy Spirit (1 John 3:24, 4:1, 4:6, 4:13, 5:6, and 5:8).

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *Our salvation comes through confession of Christ as the Son of God through faith. However, becoming a believer does not bring us lives free from sin, we still struggle with sin and the old nature.*
- *Our life in Christ begins through faith and God's command to love fellow believers as Christ loved us. Our life in Christ begins with faith and ends with love.*
- *Our love for God should be evidenced by the way we treat our brothers and sisters in Christ.*



# What I Noticed Today (1 John 4-5)

## 1 John 4

In verses 1-6 John continues what he started in 1 John 3:24 discussing the Spirit:

- Do not believe every spirit (false prophet), but test them to see if they are from God, because there are many false prophets in the world.
- This is how you know the Spirit of God: 1) they confess Jesus Christ, 2) He came in the flesh, and 3) was sent by God.
- Every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, who is in the world now (Satan).
- The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.
- They (the antichrists) are from the world, what they say is from the world and the world listens to them.
- We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to Him.
- From this we know the Spirit of truth.

In verses 7-21 John discusses how Christians should reflect the character of God.

- Love one another. Love is from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
- The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

**Note:** Love is an attribute of God. Those who love share this attribute with God.

- The proof of God's love is He sent His One and Only Son into the world that we might have eternal life through Him.
- God loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.

**Note:** "Propitiation" means to turn away God's wrath.

- If we love one another God remains in us and His love is perfected in us.

**Note:** "Remains in us" (or depending on translation "lives in us") carries the idea of abiding: God's spirit lives in us.

- Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God.
- God is love and the one who remains in love remains in God and God in him.

- Love is perfected in us so we have confidence in the day of judgement.
- There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out all fear, because fear involves punishment.
- The one who fears has not reached perfection in love.

**Note:** Meaning fear brings with it, its own brand of punishment.

- We love because He first loved us.
- Anyone who says he loves God yet hates his brother, is a liar. The one who loves God must also love his brother.

## 1 John 5

In verses 1-5 John continues the command from 1 John 4:21 to love our brothers:

- Everyone who believes Jesus is Messiah has been born of God. Everyone who love the Father also loves the Son.
- We show we love God's children by obeying His commands.
- God's commands are not a burden.
- Whatever has been born of God conquers the world.
- The one who conquers the world is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

In verses 6-13 John proves God's love through the testimony of His Son, Jesus:

- Jesus Christ came by water and blood.

**Note:** Water is represented in Jesus' baptism, and blood by His death on the cross.


- The Holy Spirit testifies because the Spirit is truth.
- The water, blood, and Spirit testify and are in agreement.

**Note:** The Spirit testifying is all the prophets who prophesied about the coming of the Lord, His work, and His death.

- The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he did not believe God's testimony about His Son.
- The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son does not have life.
- I have written this so you will know you have eternal life.

**Note:** Verses 12-13 are confirmation to believers that they have eternal life, regardless of what they might be told by the false prophets.

In verses 14-17 John speaks to the importance of prayer:

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- We are confident that anything we ask in the will of God, He hears us. And if He hears us, we know we will receive what we have asked for.

**Note:** God hears and grant prayers that are in His will.

- If anyone sees a brother committing a sin that does not bring (spiritual) death, he should ask and God will bring him life.
- You do not have to pray about sin that brings death (eternal separation from God).

**Note:** John is saying the person who rejects God completely commits a sin that brings spiritual death. Leave this person's fate in God's hands. For those who commit other sins we should pray for them to bring restoration to their relationship with God.

In verses 18-21 John summarizes and concludes the letter:

- Everyone born of God does not continually sin.

**Note:** John is not saying the believer never sins, but that the believer does not sin continually.

- The evil one (Satan) does not touch the believer who is born of God.

**Note:** Some translations capitalize "One" in verse 18 meaning it refers to Jesus Christ. However, John is talking about believers before and after this section so the reference is most likely to believers.

- We know that we are of God, and the world is under the influence of the evil one (Satan).
- We know that the Son of God has come and given us understanding so we know God and His Son Jesus Christ.
- Avoid idols.

*Some additional thoughts for consideration:*

- *As a child of God we should reflect God's love to our brothers and sisters in Christ. When we do that we are a witness to others in a way that allows people to experience God's love through us.*
- *God will keep us safe from the evil one. But we must abide in Him and He is us!*