

1 John Introduction

John 1:1-14

● 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it. 6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came as a witness, that he might testify about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but was sent that he might testify about the light. 9 The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't recognize him. 11 He came to his own, and those who were his own didn't receive him. 12 But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Relevance of 1st John

- Today's average young adult American is open minded and agnostic.
 - an inquirer
 - doubts, but he is not necessarily cynical
 - raises questions and he wants real
 - accepts few absolutes as valid
 - values personal relationships above other things
 - suspicious of institutionalized churches
- This generation of Americans, many of whom “belong to church,” are acutely interested in the basic meaning of life. It is just here that the greatest challenge comes.
- No writer in the Bible has supplied us with information more pertinent to this challenge than has John. It was his purpose, in another historical context, to answer the very questions Young America is asking.

- John too is concerned with relationships. He experienced a personal relationship with the Incarnate Word. That relationship he presents as the revelation that God is light. To walk within the circle of that light is to come into a relationship with God and with the Word and with all other men who also walk in the light.
- **Some Words ...**
 - Beginning Life
 - Gnosticism Little Children
 - Incarnation Love
 - Know Truth
 - Light Word
 - Antichrist
- Some Words used in John 1 that will help us to better understand 1 John
 - Beginning – no *reasonable* doubt that John is writing of the same Beginning as Genesis 1.
 - Word – As God pre-existed the beginning, so there was someone with God who also pre-existed the beginning.
 - Genesis 1 - note that “Let there ..., Let the ...” is used at each step.
 - But notice the change at 1:26 – “Let us ...”
 - Do you know who “us” is?
 - Word (*logos*) – generally, a word or a thought. We attempt to express our thoughts with words.
 - Would it be helpful to think of the Word as God’s expression?
 - God drew a picture – Romans 5:8 - But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us

- Light (*phos*)- that which illuminates (technically).
 - Emissive light – source, requires energy
 - Reflective light – reflects from source
- A look at light as used by John and Paul
 - Eph. 5:2-16
 - 1 John
- What Paul Wrote (Eph. 5:2-16)
 - Walk in love (2)
 - Don't let (*pick a sin*) even be mentioned (3-4)
 - No inheritance in the kingdom for those (5)
 - Wrath of God for disobedience (6)
 - Don't be like them (7)
 - You were, but now walk as children of **light** (8)
 - ... goodness, righteousness, truth (9)
 - Pleasing to the Lord (10)
 - No unfruitful deeds of darkness (11)
 - No shameful secrets (12)
 - Light reveals everything (13)
 - Can't buy back wasted time (15-16)
- What John Wrote (1 John)
 - **Says** fellowship, **does** darkness (1:6)
 - Lying, no truth

- Walk in the light (1:7)
 - fellowship with one another
 - blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin
- *Says*, “I know him,” *doesn’t* keep his commandments (2:4)
 - is a liar
 - the truth isn’t in him
- *Says* he is in the light, *hates* his brother (2:9)
 - Is in darkness
- loves his brother (2:10)
 - remains in the light
 - no occasion for stumbling in him.

Comparison of Paul and John

Ephesians 5	1 John
Walk in love (2)	Love his brother (2:10)
Watch how you walk (15-17)	Saying & doing (<i>or not</i>) (1:6; 2:4, 9; 3:18)
Walk in love (2)	Walk in the light (1:7)
No inheritance (3-5)	Not be ashamed at His coming (2:28)
Wrath of God (6)	Of the devil - destruction (3:8)
Fruit of the Spirit (8-10)	His Spirit remains in us (3:24)

- Other verses of light
 - Col. 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who made us fit to be partakers of the

inheritance of the saints in light;

— 1 Thess. 5:5 You are all children of light, and children of the day. We don't belong to the night, nor to darkness,

— **Some Words (continued)**

— Life (*zōē*) – physical, or spiritual

- This word is used 134 times in the N. T.; 47 times in the Gospel of John, and 16 times in 1 John.
- John uses “eternal life” 17 times in his gospel and 6 times in 1st John.
- Acts 17:25b - ... seeing he himself gives to all life and breath, and all things.
- 1 Cor. 15:45 - So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.
- From the time of Genesis 3, mankind was doomed to death.
- John speaks of the Word of Life in 1 John 1:1
- 2 Tim. 1:8-10 - ... 9b according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, 10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Good News.

— Love (*agapē*) – noun - properly, love which centers in moral preference. In the NT, (*agápē*) typically refers to divine love (= what God prefers).

- 18 times in 1 John.
- (Eros, Storge, Philia/Phileo, Agape)

— Love (*agapáō*) – verb - "to love" means actively doing what the Lord prefers, with Him (by His power and direction). “Loving”) is always defined by God – a "discriminating affection which involves choice and selection". (even so far as sacrificing yourself)

- Verb – 30 times in 1 John
- little children
 - This expression is found in the words of Jesus in the gospels, 8 times.
 - Matthew 18:3 - “Most certainly I tell you, unless you turn, and become as little children, you will in no way enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”
 - Paul used it one time
 - Gal. 4:19 - My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you
 - John uses it 9 times in 1 John
 - 1 John 2:1 - My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.
 - (*Legendary story of elderly John at Ephesus*)
- Gnosticism
 - the false teaching against whose influence John wrote.
 - a mixture of Oriental mysticism, Greek philosophy and Christian thought.
 - The practical effect of the Gnostic philosophy was to separate all spirit from all matter. The effect of Gnosticism on the Christian faith was two-fold:
 - 1. It denied the incarnation. The Word which was spirit, and therefore good, could not become flesh which was matter, and therefore evil.
 - 2. It denied any personal guilt of sin on the part of the individual. After all, if the spirit of man is distinct from his body, then his spirit can scarcely be held accountable for what his body does.
 - 1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
 - 1John 4:2-3 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit who

confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit who doesn't confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God, and this is the spirit of the Antichrist, of whom you have heard that it comes. Now it is in the world already.

— Antichrist (*antichristos*)

- Much is made by dispensationalists of the antichrist.
- John uses the word 5 times in 1 & 2 John
- To indicate unbelief, generally, but 3 times it strikes at the core of gnosticism.
- Antichrist is used *nowhere else* in the N. T.
- Some try to connect the “man of lawlessness” from 2 Thess. 2:3 to antichrist.
- Many modernist preachers and scholars who deny our Lord's deity should rightfully be called antichrist. But we stand on very shaky support when we teach that there will be some one particularly terrible ANTICHRIST in the future.

— Incarnation – not a N. T. word, but an event

- John 1:14 The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- 1 Cor. 15:16-17 16 For if the dead aren't raised, neither has Christ been raised. 17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins.

— know (*ginōskō*) – have knowledge, perceive, be resolved, be sure, understand.

- 1 John 2:3-5 3 This is how we **know** that we **know** him: if we **keep his commandments**. 4 One who says, “I **know** him,” and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn't in him. 5 But whoever **keeps his word**, God's love has most certainly been perfected in him. This is how we **know** that we are in him:

— Truth (*alētheia*) – reality, fact.

- 1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the

truth is not in us.

- 1John 2:4 One who says, “I know him,” and doesn’t keep his commandments, is a liar, and the **truth** isn’t in him.

- **Date of Writing**

- Most likely preceding 70 AD by very few years.
- Later, even much later, than the Gospel of John.
- John was probably the earliest of the four gospels, prior to 40 AD at the latest, and the year of Jesus’ resurrection at the earliest.
- If the gospel of John had ended at 20:31, we might think it to be complete. It is thought by many that chapter 21 was added as an epilogue later.
- However, chapter 21 is included in the oldest manuscripts we have.
 - The words “disciple” or “disciples” appear 84 times in the gospel of John --- not at all in 1, 2, 3 John.
 - Many any things in 1, 2, 3 John would be difficult to understand without some knowledge of the gospel of John.
 - The impression of old age is found in 1, 2, 3 John (“little children”) – not at all in the gospel of John.

- **Outline**

- 1 John has multiple threads woven together and appearing repeatedly throughout, so as to defy attempts to make an outline.

Threads	
Truth and falsehood	God is light
Light and darkness	Love and hate
Christ and antichrist	Life and death
Children of God and children of the	Hatred of the brethren
Spirit of truth and spirit of error	Possession of the Spirit
Truth	Salvation in Christ
Eternal life	False charity
God is love	False doctrine
	God's commandments

- **Some Purposes of Writing**

- Refute false philosophies
- Instill brotherly love in a climate where it might be lacking
- Give apostolic witness to eternal truth
- State principles for testing of faith

- **False Doctrines with Fancy names**

Gnosticism	The practical effect of the Gnostic philosophy was to separate all spirit from all matter. Spirit good; matter evil. So deity (Jesus) could never become flesh.
Docetism	Denied the humanity of Jesus, saying that His appearance was a phantom, that He was not human, did not die, did not rise from the dead.
Cerentianism	Denied the deity of Jesus. They could not reconcile the things that happened to Him with their idea of the Son of God.
Nicolaitans	Taught the unbridled indulgence of human desires, the sins of the body, were not in any sense sins of the soul. (See Rev. 2:15)
Ascetism	Taught that flesh is evil and so should be torment and deprived of any comforts. Later developed into Monasticism.