

## A Study in 1 John

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5.13)



### Introduction (Historical and Literary Context)

1. Author
  - a. an eyewitness (cf. 1 John 1.1-5)
  - b. relationship to the Gospel of John (cf. John 1.1-18 and 1 John 1.1-10)
  - c. John, the son of Zebedee (“son of thunder”)
 

**Luke 9:52-55** And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. <sup>53</sup> But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" <sup>55</sup> But he turned and rebuked them. (Cf. Mark 10.35-47)
  - d. Pastor and theologian (“dear friends,” “brothers,” and “children”)
  - e. Koine Greek
2. Audience: various churches overseen by John in Asia Minor
3. Genre: circular letter
4. Occasion and Purpose
  - a. False teaching and false brothers whose teaching and actions can be inferred from what John writes: they deny the incarnation and the atoning death of the Son of God; they’ve broken the bond of love and fellowship; they claim to be sinless

- b. **1 John 1:3-4** that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.
  - c. **1 John 2:1** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
  - d. **1 John 5:13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.
5. Date: probably the early 90s (shortly after John's Gospel)

## 1 John 1.1-4

That which was from the beginning,  
 which we have heard,  
 which we have seen with our eyes,  
 which we looked upon  
 and have touched with our hands,  
 concerning the word of life –

<sup>2</sup> the life was made manifest,<sup>A</sup>  
 and we have seen it,  
 and testify to it  
 and proclaim to you the eternal life,  
 which was with the Father  
 and was made manifest to us<sup>B</sup> –

<sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard  
 we proclaim also to you,<sup>C</sup>  
 so that you too may have fellowship with us;  
 and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

---

<sup>A</sup> **John 1.14:** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (cf. Ex 34.6-7; 40.33-38)

<sup>B</sup> **John 1.1, 14, 18:** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (cf. Ex 34.6-7; 40.33-38) ... <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

<sup>C</sup> **John 13:23** One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side; **John 21:24** This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true; **John 20:30-31** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

## 1 John 1.5-10

<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,  
that God is light,  
and in him is no darkness at all.

<sup>6</sup> If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness,  
we lie and do not practice the truth.<sup>D</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 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 cleanses us from all sin.<sup>E</sup>

<sup>8</sup> If we say we have no sin,  
we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us.

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins,  
he is faithful and just<sup>F</sup>  
to forgive us our sins and  
to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

<sup>10</sup> If we say we have not sinned,  
we make him a liar,  
and his word is not in us.

---

<sup>D</sup> **John 3:19-21** And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God; **John 8:12** Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"; **John 8:31** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

<sup>E</sup> Cf. Lev 16; Heb 7; **Numbers 6.22-26** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup> "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, <sup>24</sup> The LORD bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

<sup>F</sup> **Romans 3:21-26** But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.