

## 1 John

### History

John wrote this book to Christians in different places and countries. At this time in history, people were trying to combine Christianity with philosophies. Philosophies were different ideas about knowledge and life. One combination was Christianity and Gnosticism. Gnosticism was the view that humans are comprised of two parts: body and spirit. These parts were considered separate. The body was where sin lived. The spirit was involved in worshipping God. Gnosticism believed that Christ did not come in human form. Instead, Jesus was just a man and Christ entered his body during baptism. Christ then left Jesus' body before Jesus died.

John wrote this book to refute this philosophy.

### Chapter 1

#### Vocabulary:

echoes: repeats the same sound or message

made up: not real (fiction)

#### A. The Word of Life

John begins by calling Jesus the Word. This echoes what was written in the first chapter of the gospel of John. Jesus, the Word, is God. He has existed from the beginning. John and the other disciples were eye witnesses of Jesus. The stories that we read in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are not made up stories. The disciples saw Jesus. They talked and walked with Him. After Jesus' death and resurrection, he continued to appear to his disciples. They saw and touched the wounds in Jesus' hands and His side.

John tells us about his experience with Jesus so that we can share in this together. Through John's words, we can have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus, his Son and our Savior.

Read John 1: 1-2(pg 1125), John 20: 26-27(pg 1151), 2 Peter 1: 16-18(pg 1288),  
1John 1: 1-4(pg 1291)

#### B. Walking in the Light.

The message John brings is that God is Light. In John's gospel, Jesus Himself says that He is the Light of the World. If we follow Jesus, we will never walk in darkness. But if we say that we belong to God and still walk in darkness, we are not being truthful. But what does "darkness" mean? Darkness is sin and evil. Living in darkness means you are choosing to disobey God. People living in disobedience don't want light. They do not want their evil deeds known.

But if we walk in the light and follow Jesus, we can share in God's grace with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are made clean through Jesus' blood. The guilt of our sins is washed away.

Read John 3:19(pg 1128), John 8:12(pg 1135), Hebrews 9:14(pg 1273),  
1John 1:5-7(pg 1291)

Are we free from sin? Of course we aren't. As Proverbs says, no one has a pure heart. No one can say that they haven't sinned. If we say that we don't sin, then we don't understand God's truth. But God is faithful and He loves us. If we confess our sins, God will forgive us. But if we refuse to acknowledge our sin, we call God a liar and His word is not in our hearts.

Read Proverbs 20:9(pg 693), 1John 1:8-10(pg 1291)

### Questions

1. What does John call Jesus?
2. What proof does John give us that Jesus was real?
3. Why does John tell us about his experience with Jesus?

4. Jesus is the Light. What does it mean to live in darkness?

5. What happens when we walk in the light?

6. Are we free from sin? What does God promise us if we confess our sins?

# 1John

## Chapter 2

### Vocabulary:

advocate: someone who speaks on our behalf in court(lawyer)

penalty: the sentence in a courtroom

habitually: something you do all the time and continue to do

embodies: everything about and within the body contains this thing

refines: makes something better, purer

addresses: talks to or writes to

accomplished: something you have finished successfully

### A. Walking in the Light (continue)

John is writing this to encourage us to not sin. But of course we do sin. So Jesus is with the Father and is our advocate. The penalty of sin is death but Jesus paid the price for our sin and the sin of the world. God gave Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins. He forgives all who have faith in Jesus.

An important part of our relationship with God is our obedience. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says that anyone who loves Him will obey His teaching. If someone says they have faith in Jesus but continues to disobey God, they are lying about their faith. Yes, there are times when we sin and even choose to disobey. But 1John verse 4 refers to people who habitually live in disobedience to God.

Jesus tells us to remain joined to Him and He will remain with us. This means we should continue to obey, pray, and read God's word. As we do this, God's love will become more complete in us. If we belong to Jesus, we should live as Jesus lived. Jesus gave us an example of how to live in John chapter 13. Jesus knelt before His disciples and washed their feet. He told His disciples and us to follow His example. The point to Jesus' action was to be a servant to others. Like Jesus, we must serve those God places before us.

Read Romans 3:25(pg 1191), Romans 6:23(pg 1193), Romans 8:34(pg 1195),  
John 14:23(pg 1144), John 15: 4(pg 1144), John 13:12-17(pg 1142),  
1John 2:1-6(pg 1291)

John reminds us of an old command which is also a new command. This appears to be a bit confusing. However in Leviticus, God commands His people to love their neighbors as they love themselves. If this sounds familiar, it is! Jesus was asked what is the most important commandment. He replied, "Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And love your neighbor as you love yourself."

Although this is a command from the beginning, John calls it a new command. It is new because Jesus embodies love. Everything about Jesus is love. In fact, Jesus called it a new command. He tells us to love one another just as Jesus loves us. So the new command refines what love should look like. We should not only love others in the way that we love ourselves. We should love as Jesus does.

As we love one another, we walk in the light. If we claim to walk in the light but hate our fellow believers, we are walking in sin and darkness. If we truly love God and want to obey Him, we will love our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Read Leviticus 19:18(pg 121), Mark 12: 29-30(pg 1080), John 13: 34-35(pg 1143), 1John 2:7-11 (pg 1291)

John refers to his readers as "little children". This is a term of great affection. He wanted them and us to know that our sins are forgiven because Jesus died on the cross for us. Not only are our sins forgiven but we are also free from guilt. John also addresses a group of individuals whom he refers to as "fathers". These were the older mature Christians. John reminds this group of their long relationship with Jesus. Finally, John writes to "young people". These people were probably within the ages of 25 to 40. John reminds them that they have conquered the devil through belief in Jesus' death and resurrection. He reminds them that they are strong.

Read 1John 2: 12-14(pg 1291)

## B. Do not love the world

Don't love the world or the things that the world loves. What does the term "the world" mean? It means the people who do not love or obey God. If you love the world then you don't love God. Instead of following the world, we should change our thinking. When we love God and seek after Him, we will understand His plans.

People who love the world try to satisfy their sinful natures. They are envious of what they see. They are proud of what they possess and what they have accomplished. This type of love comes from the devil, not God.

What we must remember is that this world is only temporary. This world will end but the people who love God will last forever.

Read Romans 12:2(pg 1199), 1 John 2:15-17(pg 1292)

### C. A warning about the enemies of Christ

We are now living in the last days. The last days, by definition, started when Jesus ascended into Heaven and will continue until He returns to earth. In the last days, many false Christs and false prophets will come and try to fool God's children. John says that these false prophets actually came into the churches with the believers. These false prophets and antichrists left the churches because they didn't belong. There was no fellowship.

The true believers stayed firm in their belief because they belonged to Christ. The Holy Spirit reminded the believers of the truth of God's word.

Who is the liar? Who is the true enemy of Christ? It is the person who says that Jesus is not the Christ. This was the main belief of the Gnostics. They did not know God. They did not acknowledge Jesus Christ, God's Son. Anyone who loves and obeys Jesus belongs to God the Father. Believers have a wonderful promise – we will have eternal life. Evil people may try to lead us away from God. But God has given us His Holy Spirit. He guides us, directs us, and reminds us of the truth.

Read Matthew 24:24(pg 1057), John 14:26(pg 1144), John 14:23(pg 1144),  
1John 2:18-27(pg 1292)

### D. Children of God

We are God's children. As we wait for Christ's return, we must continue to grow in our relationship with our Father. God is righteous in all His ways. Christ's righteousness makes us right before God.

Read 1John 2:28-29(pg 1292)

## Questions

1. What did Jesus do for us? What is He doing now for us in Heaven?
2. What is an important part to our relationship with God?
3. How do we remain joined to Christ?
4. What was the old command? How did Jesus change it?
5. Do not love the world. What does “the world” mean?
6. What does the Holy Spirit do to help us against false prophets?

## I John

### Chapter 3

#### Vocabulary:

Privilege: the right

Expectantly: to look forward to, to eagerly wait

Purified: become pure

#### A. Children of God (continued)

God loves us so much and He gives this love to us freely. When we accept Jesus, He gives us the privilege to become children of God. And we are truly God's children. God's Holy Spirit lives in us to make us children of God. The world doesn't see us as God's children because they don't know God.

Yes, we are God's children but we will become more and more like Jesus. In Romans, we read that it is God's plan to make us like Jesus. In fact, we are now going through the process of changing to become like Him. When Christ returns, this change will be complete because we will see Jesus as He is. As we expectantly hope in Jesus return, we are purified through Christ.

Read John 1:12 (pg 1125), Romans 8:15(pg 1195), Romans 8:29(pg 1195), 2Cor. 3:18(pg 1221), I John 3:1-3(pg 1292)

We all break God's law and breaking His law is sin. But Jesus who never sinned was pierced for our sin. God made Jesus to be sin for our sake. If we are truly God's children, we will not keep habitually sinning. If we continue sinning, then we really do not know God at all.

Don't let anyone try to turn you away from God. Continue to do what is right and you will be holy as Christ is holy. Christ has given us His righteousness. Those who choose to sin are following the devil. The devil has been a sinner and murderer from the beginning. But Jesus came to destroy the devil. He did this by dying for us and then rising from the dead.

If we are God's children, we will not continue to sin. This is because God's very nature is in us through the Holy Spirit. How can we tell the children of God

from the children of the devil? The children of the devil don't do what is right and they do not love others.

Read Isaiah 53:5-6(pg 790), 2Cor. 5:21(pg 1222), John 8:44(pg 1136),  
Hebrews 2:14(pg 1268), I John 3:4-10(pg 1292)

## B. Love One Another

John again reminds us to love one another. This time John gives us a negative example. He reminds us what we should not do. We should not be like Cain. Cain and Abel were brothers. Cain worked the ground while Abel took care of sheep. From the beginning, Cain's thinking was wrong. He chose to give God some of what he had grown but there is no indication that Cain gave his best. Abel, however, picked his best lambs to offer to God. God was pleased with Abel's offering but He was not pleased with Cain's. Cain became very angry. God reminded Cain to do what was right but Cain refused. Instead Cain chose to murder his brother Abel. Why did Cain murder Abel? Because what Abel did was right and what Cain did was wrong.

Read Genesis 4:1-8(pg 4), 1 John 3:11-12(pg 1293)

We have given up our old life and our former nature. Anyone who believes in Christ has a new life. Our former sinful life no longer controls us, instead the Holy Spirit does. If we hate our brothers and sisters, we are like murderers. We know that murder is wrong and we should never commit murder. But Jesus took this even further. In Matthew, we read that Jesus said we should not even be angry with our brother.

Jesus gave His life for us. This is what real love looks like. We should be willing to sacrifice our lives for our brothers and sisters. If we see other Christians in need, we should do what we can to help them. If we are not willing to do this, God's love is not in us.

Read Matthew 5:21-22(pg 1033), Romans 8: 9(pg 1194), 2 Cor. 5:17(pg 1222),  
1 John 3:13-17(pg 1293)

Love is more than talk and more than emotion. We must put our love into action. What are these actions? 1 Corinthians 13 is a key passage about what love looks like in action. We should be patient and kind to other people. We should not

be rude or boastful. We can choose to show people grace by not getting angry or keeping account of how someone has wronged you.

When we respond in love, we know we are obeying God. We know that we are doing what is right. When we are doing what is right, we can be bold in our prayers. God has commanded us to believe in Jesus and to love one another. When we do this, we know we belong to God. This is confirmed by the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Read 1 Corinthians 13: 4-5(pg 1214), 1 John 3:18-24(pg 1293)

### Questions

1. When we accept Jesus, what do we become?
2. When Jesus returns, what will we be like?
3. If we are truly God's children, what will we **not** do?
4. What was the negative example of loving one another?
5. What does love look like?
6. What are some examples of love in action?

## 1 John

### Chapter 4

#### Vocabulary:

end times: from the time Jesus ascended to Heaven until He returns

undermine: to damage or weaken

discern: to recognize

#### A. Jesus came as a human being

John begins this chapter with a warning for believers to test the information that they receive. Jesus himself told His disciples to be careful during the end times. False prophets will come and try to fool the believers. How can we tell if someone has the Holy Spirit? If someone agrees that Jesus came in human form, they belong to God. Also no one can say “Jesus is Lord” without the Holy Spirit. Any person who doesn’t agree that Jesus came to earth as a human does not belong to God. Satan, Jesus’ greatest enemy, is present in the world constantly trying to undermine the believers’ faith.

Because we belong to God, we can discern what is false. The Holy Spirit who lives in us is greater than Satan. False prophets are of this world. The world listens to them because they are part of this world.

We belong to God. We listen to those who love God. But those who do not know God will not listen. This is how we can tell the difference between the spirit of truth and the spirit of lies.

Read Matt. 24:4(pg 1062), 1 Cor. 12:3(pg 1216), 1 John 4: 1-6(pg 1299)

#### B. We love because God loved us.

We should love one another because of God’s love for us. God is the source of love. When we love with God’s love, we know we are God’s children. God loves the world so much that he sent His only Son to die for us. God did this so we could receive eternal life through Jesus. Love is not about us loving God but rather about God loving us enough to sacrifice His son for us. God doesn’t wait for us to become good enough. While we were sinners, Christ died for us. Since God loves us so much, we should love others. In John 15, Jesus tells us to love one

another as Jesus loves us. Jesus demonstrated this love by dying for us. No one has seen God but when we love one another, God's love is completed in us.

Read John 3:16(pg 1132 ), John 15: 12-13(pg 1148), Romans 5:8(pg 1195),  
1John 4: 7-12(pg 1299)

We know that we belong to God because His Holy Spirit lives in us. God sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. If we say with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we become joined to God as His children. We know that God loves us. This allows us to love one another. Love is fulfilled in us when we imitate Jesus. There is no fear in love. In fact, perfect love forces fear away. What we fear is death and punishment. But when we love and trust God, we are free of fear.

Again, remember that we love because He loved us. It is God's love for us that allows us to love others. If we claim to love God but hate our fellow believers, then we are liars. How can we love God who we can't see, if we don't love our brothers and sisters.

Read Romans 10:9(pg 1200), 1 John 4:13-21(pg 1299)

### Questions

1. How can we tell if someone has the Holy Spirit?
2. How can we tell the difference between the spirit of truth and the spirit of lies?
3. How is the source of love?

4. How did God prove that He loves the world?

5. Since God loves us so much, how should we respond?

6. When is love fulfilled in us?

## 1 John

### Chapter 5

#### Vocabulary:

victors: those who win

symbols: something that represents something else

testify: give witness to

refute: show evidence against something

cites: identifies

#### A. Faith in God's Son who became a human being.

Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. Everyone who loves God also loves His children. How do we know if we love God's children? We know it when we love God and obey His command. His commands are not hard to obey. To obey God is to love since God is love. As children of God, we have overcome the world. This is because Jesus won the battle by His death and resurrection. Our faith in Jesus makes us victors in the battle.

Jesus was born in human form. As a human, He was baptized with water. Jesus also died on the cross for us spilling His blood for our sins. These symbols of water and blood testify to who Jesus is. The Holy Spirit is also a witness for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth. John is emphasizing Jesus' baptism and death to refute the Gnostics belief that Christ entered Jesus' body at baptism and left at the cross.

John cites three witnesses for Jesus. In Jewish culture, it is necessary for there to be three witnesses. But it is more important that God is a witness. When Jesus was baptized, God spoke from Heaven saying, "You are my Son. I am pleased with you". If you believe in Jesus, then you accept what God says about Him. God has given us eternal life through Jesus.

Read Mark 1: 10-11(pg 1070), John 16: 33(pg 1150), 1 John 5: 1-12 (pg 1300)

#### B. Final words

John wrote this letter to remind those who believe in Jesus that they have eternal life. When we pray, God hears us. Jesus said that if we seek God and ask

Him for anything, we will receive God's blessings. God is our Father and He wants to give good things to His children.

We should pray for our brothers and sisters in the Lord who may be struggling with sin. We should pray that God will give them life. However, there is a sin that leads to death. Hebrews chapter 6 indicates that this is when someone rejects Jesus and turns away from God. This leads to death since they have refused the eternal life that God offers.

Since we are God's children, we no longer habitually sin. God loves us and protects us from Satan. Even though the world is controlled by Satan, we belong to God through Jesus. Jesus has given us the understanding that we need to know God.

Read Matthew 7:7-11(pg 1041), Hebrews 6:4-6(pg 1276), 1 John 5:13-21(pg 1300)

### Questions

1. How do we know if we love God's children?
2. What makes us victors in the battle against the world?
3. What symbols testify to who Jesus is?
4. Who is Jesus' most important witness?

5. Why did John write this letter?

6. What sin leads to death?