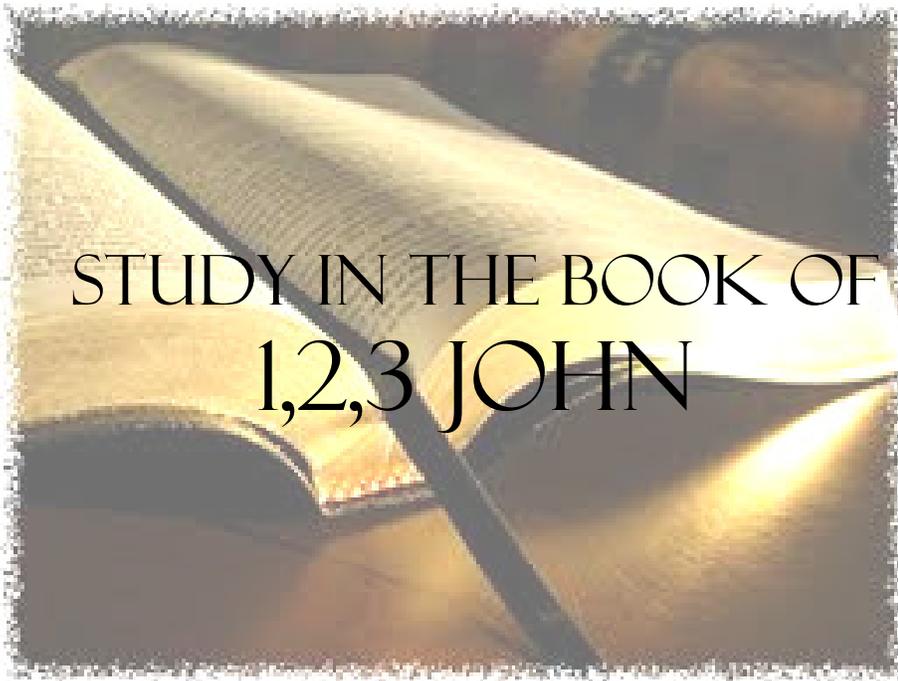


Footprints



CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



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Footprints into Africa

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

OUTLINE

1. THE WORD OF LIFE (1: 1-4)
 - A. THE ETERNAL PRE-EXISTENCE
 - B. THE HISTORICAL MANIFESTATION
 - C. THE AUTHORITATIVE PROCLAMATION
 - D. THE OUTCOME IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

2. EXPERIENCING FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (1:5-2:11)
 - A. WALK IN THE LIGHT (1:5-7)
 - a) The truth about God
 - b) The false claim
 - c) The results of walking in the light
 - B. CONFESS SIN (1:8-9)
 - a) The false claim
 - b) The way through
 - c) The assurance
 - C. RELY ON CHRIST (1:10-2:2)
 - a) The Problem
 - b) The way forward
 - D. OBEY IN LOVE (2:3-11)
 - a) Obey the commands
 - b) Obey the command to love

3. LIVING FOR GOD : LIVING IN THE WORLD (2:12-17)
 - A. LIVING FOR GOD (2:12-14)
 - B. LIVING IN THE WORLD (2:15-17)

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 - A. THE LAST HOUR (v.18)
 - B. THE ANTI-CHRIST (v.19-28)
 - a) Who are they?
 - b) How do we recognize them?
 - c) How do we counteract them?

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 - A. ASSURANCE
 - a) Recipients of the love of God
 - b) Members of the Divine family
 - c) Partakers of the Divine glory
 - B. RIGHTEOUSNESS
 - a) The true child of God does what is right
 - b) The true child of God does not continue to sin
 - c) The true child of God is driven towards righteousness
 - i) The hope motivates towards righteousness

- ii) The past appearing of Jesus has destroyed the devil's work
- iii) the new birth implants in the believer God's seed

6. **THE LOVING CHILDREN OF GOD** (3:11-24)
- A. LOVE IS THE CRUX OF THE APOSTOLIC MESSAGE
 - B. LOVE IS THE PROOF THAT WE HAVE PASSED OUT OF DEATH
 - C. LOVE HAS ITS SUPREME REVELATION IN THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF CHRIST (v.16-18)
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 - b) **God's historical gift**
 - B. WE ARE ASSURED OF GOD'S INDWELLING
 - a) **The Spirit**
 - b) **We confess Christ**
 - c) **We dwell in love**
 - C. WE ARE REMINDED OF THE FRUIT OF PERFECT LOVE
 - a) **A confident attitude towards God, devoid of fear**
 - b) **A loving concern for fellow Christians**
9. **GOD'S GOOD GIFTS AND HOW TO OBTAIN THEM** (5:1-12)
- A. GOD'S GOOD GIFTS
 - a) **The sure knowledge that you have been born of God**
 - b) **The ability to overcome the world**
 - c) **The certainty that eternal life is found in the Son of God**
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- A. CHRISTIANS KNOW THEY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE
 - B. CHRISTIANS KNOW GOD ANSWERS THEIR PRAYERS
 - C. CHRISTIANS HAVE VICTORY OVER SIN, AND VICTORY OVER THE EVIL ONE
 - D. CHRISTIANS HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD
 - E. CHRISTIANS HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN CHRIST

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

STUDY 1

INTRODUCTION

A. WHO WROTE THIS BOOK?

The Apostle John.

B. WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?

This letter is one of the latest of the New Testament writings (one of the last). It was written sometime between **90–100 A.D.**

C. WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?

The background to this letter was false-teaching of “agnostic kind”. In the light of the false teaching, John refutes the false teaching and affirms the true apostolic message.

- The Gnostic false teaching denied the goodness of the material world (physical world) and therefore denied the humanity of Jesus Christ, that the God of the Bible is the true God.

1. THE WORD OF LIFE (1:1-4)

The centre of this prolog introduction is the “Word of Life.”

John is proclaiming the Word of Life.

He mentions four things that relate to the Word of Life:

A. THE ETERNAL PRE-EXISTENCE (v.1a)

The Word of Life was there from the beginning. The beginning is the one also mentioned in **John 1:1** (The eternal beginning).

B. THE HISTORICAL MANIFESTATION (v.2)

v.2 tells us that “life appeared” and that we have seen it with our eyes, looked at and touched with our hands and testify to it. (Refuting false teaching of Gnosticism).

John refutes the Gnostic teaching by stressing the physical appearing (manifestation) of the Word of Life. **See John 1:14**

(The Gnostics taught that the Word did not become human, he only appeared to be human.)

God loves this world **John 3:16**. He will restore this world.

C. THE AUTHORITATIVE PROCLAMATION (v.1,2,3)

John says that the Word who became human is now the message which is proclaimed. (There is no other message.)

D. THE OUTCOME IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

The result of the proclamation of the Word of Life is two-fold:

a) v.3 “So that you may also have fellowship with us (the apostles).”

The proclamation is to bring us into fellowship and unity with the apostles themselves.

- i) Apostle – the carriers of revelation, instruments of revelation. (This meaning of apostle is no longer.)
- ii) Apostle – one who takes the gospel where it has never been heard.
- b) **That there might be complete joy. (v.4)**

2. EXPERIENCING FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (1:5-2:11)

The false claims made by the false-teachers are refuted by John.

They claimed to have fellowship with God, but John refutes this claim in a number of different ways.

A. WALK IN THE LIGHT (1:5-7)

a) **The truth about God (v.5)**

“God is light” (v.5), declares that God is morally pure.

b) **The false claim (v.6)**

The false teachers claimed to know God, yet, they were walking in darkness. (They were living evil lives.)

c) **The results of walking in the light (v.7)**

Those that walk in the light have unity with the apostolic truth, and they experience the purifying power of Jesus in their lives.

*** If you truly have fellowship with God, there is change (Sanctification). Only those who walk in the light can claim that they have fellowship with God.**

B. CONFESS SIN (v.8-9)

a) **False claim (v.8)**

The false claim was that of being sinless (without sin).

b) **The way forward (9a)**

The way forward is to acknowledge that we are sinners, and to confess our sins (v.9).

*** John is saying that a Christian by nature is a confessing person – a person with a contrite heart.**

c) **The Assurance (v.9b)**

The confessing person is assured of two things:

i) Forgiveness (v.9b)

ii) Cleansing (v.9c) **Sanctification**

As we confess, purification will take place.

C. RELY ON CHRIST (1:10-2:2)

a) **The Problem**

By denying that we have sinned, we call God a liar.

The reason for this is that God’s whole plan of salvation pre-supposes (is rooted) human sinfulness.

If we are not sinners. We do not need salvation.

If we claim we are not sinners, we are saying that God’s evaluation of us is a lie, and His whole plan of salvation is a fabrication (a hoax, a lie).

b) The way forward

The way forward is to acknowledge our sin, and to rely on Christ for atonement (redemption).

Through Jesus we are secure and we are no longer required to pay the penalty for our sins. (That is eternal death.)

Jesus is our defense, and He is our sacrifice.

- i)** Jesus intercedes for me because He paid the price.
- ii)** Jesus turns away the wrath of God so that I don't have to die for my sin.
Satan therefore has no hold on me.

D. OBEY IN LOVE (2:3-11)

The false claim that a person can know God and yet not do what God commands. On the contrary, the person who knows God obeys God. There will be failure, but this will not be what determines our lives.

This disobedience will not be what determines our lives.

The believer longs to obey, he loves God's commands.

a) Obey the commands (v.3-6)

John begins with a general reference to God's commands. The true believer obeys God's Word. They walk as Jesus did.

b) Obey the COMMAND to love (v.7-11)

John now becomes more specific and he illustrates what this obedience means. (v.7- 8 speaks of the new and the old command.)

The command is the command to love (v.9-10)

- i)** The command to love is old because it was already given in the Old Testament.
But;
- ii)** It is "new" in how we understand it. We understand the breadth of love, it must extend even into the enemy. We understand the depth of love – it must be sacrificial.
Don't just do no harm to the enemy, but do good to him (don't just ignore him).

John illustrates the false and the true claim in v.9-10.

By definition a Christian is a loving person.

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

STUDY 2

3. LIVING FOR GOD ; LIVING IN THE WORLD (2:12-17)

A. LIVING FOR GOD (2:12-14)

John mentions three different groups of Christians:

- a) **The children**
- b) **The young men**
- c) **The Fathers**

These groupings refer to Christian maturity, not age as such.

John wants to encourage these different kinds of Christians to remain true to their Christian convictions.

- i) We have the "children" they know they have been forgiven and they know they have a Father in heaven (**v12,13c**).
- ii) These are the "young men" who are in the midst of the battle, and have won the battle (**v.13b/14b**). They are strong and victorious in spiritual warfare.
- iii) These are the "fathers" who are the spiritually mature, and they are characterized by their deep communion with God (**v.13a/v.14a**).
All these people John is implying must continue to live for God.

B. LIVING IN THE WORLD (2:15-17)

- a) John urges the Christians not to love the world or anything in the world. John is using the word "world" to describe the system of human civilization and activity, which is apposed to God.

* **John is not suggesting that we deny the goodness of the world.**

- b) John describes exactly what he means by the "world" (**v.16**).

These are three things:

- i) "The craving of sinful men"
This is allowing our natural appetites to get out of control. Allowing our desires to control us. (Think of Eve & Adam and us!)
- ii) "The lust of the eyes"
We see and we want.
- iii) "The boasting of what he has and does"
This is the arrogant spirit of self-sufficiency and sense of security.
What do you have that you have not received from the Lord? Get rid of that kind of stuff.

- c) John reminds us that the world will pass away.
(These values will pass away. Creation will not pass away, it will be restored.)
But those who do the will of God will live forever.

4. THE CONFLICT OF TRUTH AND ERROR (2:18-28)

A. THE LAST HOUR (v.18)

The "last hour" refers to the same time as the phrase "the last days".

Heb.1:2 "In the last days He has spoken to us by His Son."

Or:

“The end times”

1 Peter 4:7 “The end of all things is near.”

B. THE ANTI-CHRIST (v.19-28)

John affirms that there will be a final anti-Christ, but he also reminds us that there will be many anti-Christ.

a) Who are they?

The anti-Christ comes claiming a deliverer and a provider of peace and prosperity.

b) How do we recognize them?

i) We will recognize them by their departure from the apostolic community (v.19).

They will deny the apostolic truth.

ii) The anti-Christ will depart from the truth (v.22)

Specifically in this context, the anti-Christ denied that Jesus is the Christ.

C. HOW DO WE COUNTERACT THEM?

a) By letting God’s truth remain in us (v.24-25).

John urges the Christians to remain true to the truth they heard when they believed.

b) They (we) must recognize that God’s anointing is ours as followers of Jesus.

To impose themselves and their teaching by claiming that they had the anointing.

Twice John reminds these Christians that “you” have the anointing and “you” know the truth (v.20.27).

All believers in Jesus are anointed.

Anointing – presence of the Spirit in me to enable me to achieve God’s purpose for my life.

The Spirit testifies to the truth in me!

When John says that these Christians do not need anyone to teach them, he is implying that they do not need anyone to teach them some new truth (secret knowledge). We do not need a new gospel.

5. THE RIGHTEOUS CHILDREN OF GOD (2:29-3:10)

A. ASSURANCE (v.1-2, & Ch.3)

John warns the Christians, but he also constantly assures them, and that is what he does here in these two verses.

a) The Christians are Recipients of the love of God (3:1).

b) They are Members of the Divine family (Children of God) (3:1-2).

c) Christians are partakers of Divine glory (v.2).

The Christian is already assured that when Jesus returns he will receive a glorified body, and he will be like Jesus in his character as well.

John warns Christians, but he also encourages them.

B. RIGHTEOUSNESS

John returns to his main concern which is to give these Christians the means to test what is true, and what is false. Here he returns to the test of righteousness (Obedience to God's commands).

The tests are:

How are we living?	Moral
How we believe in Christ?	Doctrinal
How do we love?	Social

a) The true child of God does what is right (2:29).

OBEDIENCE TO GOD

(3:10) – “Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God. See also 3:7.

b) The true child of God does not continue to sin (v.4).

This is an amplification of part “a” (it clarifies it).

The true child of God does not sin habitually. It is not his way of life. The unbeliever is characterized by sin in his life. The believer struggles against this sinful lifestyle.

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

STUDY 3

5. THE RIGHTEOUS CHILDREN OF GOD (2:29-3:10) (Continued)

Three tests:

- | | | | |
|------|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| i) | <u>Moral test</u> | - | Obedience |
| ii) | <u>Social test</u> | - | Love |
| iii) | <u>Doctrinal test</u> | - | Do you believe Jesus is the Christ? |

B. RIGHTEOUSNESS (continued)

c) **The true child of God is driven towards Righteousness**

As John outlines the test of Righteousness, he also speaks of the true child of God as a person who is drawn toward righteousness.

There is a drive pulling the believer towards righteousness.

i) The hope motivates towards Righteousness (3:3)

The true believer has this hope rooted in his heart. (The hope described in 3:2.)

There is a pull of being like Jesus.

Therefore, the believer is drawn to become like Jesus.

Our destiny is to be like Jesus – not just righteous in a legal sense, but in a real sense. **See Eph. 5:25-27.**

The Spirit works in us to give us that longing to be like Jesus.

ii) The past appearing of Jesus has destroyed the devil's work.

John reminds us that the very reason for the coming of Jesus was to destroy the devil's work, i.e. his work in our lives, away from righteousness and towards sin.

Therefore the way is now open for us to enter the path of righteousness.

iii) The new birth Implants in the believer God's Seed (v.9)

God's seed is perhaps His Word and His Spirit which has been planted in every believer so that they will be empowered to live a righteous life.

God is working through His Spirit, Word (Son) to make us holy (righteous).

6. THE LOVING CHILDREN OF GOD (3:11-24)

John now picks up on the social tests again.

"The love your neighbour test."

(v.23-24) = Faith, Love – (Social), Obedience – (moral)

(Love is in the centre, it holds faith and obedience together.)

A. LOVE IS THE CENTRE OF THE APOSTOLIC MESSAGE

B. LOVE IS THE PROOF THAT WE HAVE PASSED OUT OF DEATH (v.12-15)

Cain is an example of a person who did not love, and therefore we do not expect to see him in God's Kingdom.

* **Ask the Lord to give you the same love that He had and has for people. Jesus ate and drank with sinners (enemies).**

Jesus did not condone their sins, but He recognized that they did not know any better.

* He gave the good news to the unbeliever, but to the believers he went as the Prophet (rebuke).

Your neighbour is anyone who is near you – love them.

C. LOVE HAS IT'S SUPREME REVELATION IN THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF CHRIST (v.16-18)

v.16 - John defines love: v.17-18 – John applies love.

Jesus is the supreme revelation of the meaning of love.

Love means giving our whole effort for the well-being of the other person.

“Lay down your lives for your brothers.” This love is active. (See Phil 2:5-8)

D. LOVE BRINGS ASSURANCE OF OUR STANDING BEFORE GOD (v.19-24)

v.19 stresses that the assurance that we have that we are indeed children of God, is the result of the love we have expressed towards others.

N.B. It follows that if this active love is lacking in our lives we must not be surprised if we have a condemning heart.

When I love truly, the Spirit will give me assurance – if I don't love my heart will condemn me (the Spirit will take away my assurance).

7. TESTING THE SPIRITS (4:1-6)

This is the third test, the doctrinal test.

A. THE COMMAND (v.1)

The command is in two parts:

a) **Do not believe every spirit**

John sees through the false teachers, he sees that they are influenced by Satan.

John urges believers not to believe any and every message.

b) **“Test the Spirits to see whether they are from God “**

The reason for this is that there is much false teaching in the world, “because many false prophets have gone out into the world”.

B. THE TESTS

John here highlights (specifies) the doctrinal test, because this is the essential test that must be applied to the message that has been heard.

The doctrinal test is in two parts:

a) In this context it concerned the person of Jesus. Because one of the fundamental issues taught by the false prophets had to do with the person of Jesus.

They denied that Jesus was the Christ.

“Every Spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”

What we believe about Jesus' Person and ministry is CRUCIAL!

b) The second part of the test concerns the divine inspiration of the Apostolic teaching.

The point is made especially in **v.6**.

“We are from God.”

There are no more revelation apostles.

“And whoever knows God listens to us.”

The “we” in **v.6** are (refers to) the twelve Apostles, and Paul; who were the instruments of God’s revelation.

True believers listen to their message and no other message.

- i) God in various ways and various means revealed Himself to people. Not every act of God is in the Bible, but we don’t need to know all the records of that which God did or said to people. What is in the Bible is sufficient.
- * **God is not giving extra revelation – He is explaining His message through preachers and teachers etc.**
- * **We therefore should not add to it.**
- ii) Jesus is with us in Spirit – but not to give us more messages. The Spirit convicts us and leads us to the truth. The Spirit Illuminates, it does not bring Revelation.
- * **God explains to us through Christ and through the Spirit of Christ the message which He has revealed us to.**

THE BIBLE IS SUFFICIENT !!

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

STUDY 4

THE TESTING OF THE SPIRITS (Continued)

C. THE ASSURANCE

John has given the command concerning false teaching, and the tests to be applied to the false teaching.

Now he gives them a word of assurance.

a) **Christians are from God (v.4a)**

Those who hold to the apostolic truth are from God.

b) **Christians have overcome (v.4b)**

The Christians have withstood the teaching of the false teachers because the Spirit of God within the Christian is more powerful than the spirit of Satan.

* **There is a contrast between them and us.**

8. GOD'S LOVE FOR US AND OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS (v.7-9)

John returns to the 'love' issue.

A. WE ARE TOLD WHY WE SHOULD LOVE (v.7-9)

a) **God's eternal nature**

John stresses that God is love, and so all those who are His show that they are His by their love for one another.

* **If you are a child of God you must be a loving person.**

b) **God's historical gift (v.9-11)**

John reminds the Christians of God's love for us revealed in the sending of His Son for us.

Because God so loved us we must love one another (**v.11**).

God gives Himself for us and that is glorifying to Him!

God loves His creation, and He longs to restore His creation.

This should humble us; that God Almighty should give Himself and all His energy to restore us.

B. WE ARE ASSURED OF GOD'S INDWELLING (v.12-16)

a) **The Spirit (v.13)**

See 3:4b – **"This is how we know He lives in us, we know it by the Spirit that is in us."**

The Spirit testifies in our hearts that we are God's people.

The gift of the Spirit is proof that God is in us and that we are His.

b) **We Confess Christ (v.14-15)**

John repeats the doctrinal test.

"Jesus is the Son of God," says the true Christian.

c) **We dwell in love (v.16)**

The social test – do we love?

- C. WE ARE REMINDED OF THE FRUIT OF PERFECT LOVE (v.17-21)
- a) **A confident attitude toward God, devoid of fear (v.17-18)**
When God's love is in us, we shall not fear God's judgement.
- b) **A loving concern for fellow Christians**
(The perfect love of God in us must result in us loving others.)
* **To love God, you must love your brother.**

9. GODS GOOD GIFTS AND HOW TO OBTAIN THEM (5:1-12)

A. GOD'S GOOD GIFTS:

- a) **The sure knowledge that you have been born of God (v.1-3)**
God wants us to know that we have been born of Him (born from above, new birth). This is proved by our love for other Christians and it is proved by our obedience to God's commands.
- b) **The ability to overcome the world (v.3b-5)**
The world is the outlook and values of society without God.
* **The world without the good rule of God. Christians should be establishing 'sign posts' pointing to the good rule of God that will come with Christ.**
But, the power to overcome the world and please God is available. The power is our FAITH rooted in Jesus Christ.
* **John is not telling us to be against the creation, but against the values that go against God.**
- c) **The certainty that eternal life is found in the Son of God (v.6-12)**
John refers to the Christian having God's testimony in the heart. This testimony in the heart is that conviction that eternal life is found in Jesus the Son of God (v.10, 11) and only in Jesus.
This testimony of God concerning Jesus is confirmed by three witnesses. The Spirit, the Water, and the Blood. (John gives confirmation)
- i) The Spirit of God testifies that Jesus born in Bethlehem, baptized in the Jordan and crucified in Jerusalem is the Son of God, who alone gives eternal life.
- ii) The water of the Jordan River in which Jesus was baptized is the Son of God who gives eternal life.
* **Imagine the Jordan River speaking.**
Not only the water (baptism) but also the cross.
- iii) The Blood which flowed from Jesus at His crucifixion also "speaks" that this Jesus who was crucified is the Son of God, who gives eternal life. There are many ideas about what John means here, but within the context this theory fits the best.

B. HOW TO OBTAIN GOD'S GOOD GIFTS

These good gifts are received only by those who believe that Jesus is the Christ (Son of God). See **v. 5** and **v.10**.

You cannot have certainty, ability, and knowledge if you don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

* **Jehovah's Witnesses do not affirm that Jesus is divine.**

10. GREAT CHRISTIAN CERTAINTIES (5:13-21)

John brings his letter to a close with five notes (points) of positive conviction. (The five we know):

A. CHRISTIANS KNOW THAT THEY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE (v.13)

John affirms again that those who believe in the name of the Son of God have confidence that they have eternal life.

* **We go to Jesus (and Him alone) for eternal life.**

B. CHRISTIANS KNOW THAT GOD ANSWERS THEIR PRAYERS (v.14-17)

a) Confidence in prayer (v.14c)

i) There is a confident attitude in prayer
see **Hebrews 4:16. Hebrews 10:19-20.**

ii) There is a confidence in the outcome of our prayers
God hears us **(v.14b).**

b) God's will in Prayer

There is a condition attached to receiving, i.e. asking according to God's will.

* **There is no formula in prayer – it is a RELATIONSHIP.**

c) The sin to death and prayer (v.16-17)

At this point John introduces a particular issue in connection with prayer.

* **Remember the background of the false teachers, the context.**

i) The sin that leads to death is the sin that denies the truth concerning Jesus, which the Spirit brings.

* **Rejecting the gospel. This was precisely the sin of the false teachers.**

To refuse Jesus is not a problem, refusing the Holy Spirit that reveals Jesus to you is a problem.

ii) The sin that does not lead to death is all other sins.

C. CHRISTIANS HAVE VICTORY OVER SIN (v.18)

John says two things here:

a) Christians have victory over sin (v.18a)

Christians do sin from time to time, but it is not the habitual lifestyle of the believer. It is not a habit of his life.

“Sin and the child of God are incompatible. They may occasionally meet, but they cannot live together in harmony.” John Stott

b) The Christian has victory over the evil one (v.18b)

The Christian has the enabling to overcome the deceitfulness and lies of Satan. The one of who is born of God keeps himself safe. See **John 5:4-5**.

c) Christians have an understanding of the world (v.19)

The Christian understand the present reality. The Christian understands that Satan has some measure of control in the World. **See Ephesians 2:2 -“**
But the Christian is a child of God and so the Christian is no longer under the control of Satan.

d) Christians have a knowledge of God in Christ (v.20)

There is a stress on the word “True”.

Our faith rests on what is true. We have been given understanding to know the One who is true.

STUDIES IN 2 & 3 JOHN

OUTLINE

2 JOHN

PRIORITIES OF TRUTH AND LOVE

INTRODUCTION (1-3)

- A. **"THE ELDER"**
 - B. **"THE CHOSEN LADY"**
 - C. **TRUTH AND LOVE**
1. **PRIORITIES AND HOW TO LIVE BY THEM (v.4-6)**
 - A. **TRUTH**
 - B. **LOVE**
 2. **PROBLEMS AND HOW TO COPE WITH THEM (v.7-11)**
 - A. **HOW TO RESIST FALSE TEACHERS**
 - B. **HOW TO RELATE TO FALSE TEACHERS**

3 JOHN

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

1. JOHN – A FATHERLY CHRISTIAN (v.1-2)

- A. LOVE IN THE TRUTH
- B. PRAYER FOR WELL BEING
- C. AFFIRMING AND ENCOURAGING GAIUS

2. GAIUS – A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN (v. 3-8)

- A. FAITHFUL TO THE TRUTH (v.3-4)
- B. FAITHFUL IN HIS LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN (v.5-8)
 - a) **Gaius' hospitality was based on the following**
 - i) The brethren were ambassadors for Christ.
 - ii) The brethren could not depend upon support "from the pagans".
 - iii) The brethren were co-workers for the truth.
 - b) **Gaius' hospitality was to be "in a manner worthy of God".**

3. DIOTREPHES – A DIVISIVE CHRISTIAN (v.9-10)

- A. HE LOVED TO BE FIRST
- B. HE REJECTED AUTHORITY
- C. GOSSIPED MALICIOUSLY
- D. HE FORMED A CLIQUE

4. DEMETRIUS – A REPUTABLE CHRISTIAN (v. 11-12)

His reputation was:

- A. SPOKEN OF BY EVERYONE
- B. SPOKEN OF "EVEN BY THE TRUTH ITSELF"
- C. SPOKEN OF BY THE APOSTLE HIMSELF

STUDIES IN 2 & 3 JOHN

STUDY 1

2 JOHN

PRIORITIES OF TRUTH AND LOVE

2 John was written to a church in the context of itinerant preachers. Its major concerns are the priorities of truth and love and the problems associated with the itinerant preachers (travelling preachers).

INTRODUCTION

A. “THE ELDER”

The elder is the author of the letter, and it refers to this person’s official position as a leader of churches.

* **Elder = Leader**

The leader (elder) here is the apostle John.

B. “THE CHOSEN LADY”

This is most likely a reference to a local church, personified as a lady.

C. TRUTH AND LOVE

Truth and love are clearly clear themes of the letter.

1. PRIORITIES AND HOW TO LIVE BY THEM (v.4-6)

A. TRUTH

The apostle stresses that he is full of joy because some of those he addresses are walking in the truth (**v.4**).

The walking in the truth is to live in a way which accords with the truth.

The truth – Orthodoxy (Doctrine) - Orthopraxis (Action) and you cannot separate these.

(In the study of religion, *orthopraxy* is correct conduct, both ethical and liturgical, as opposed to faith or grace etc. This contrasts with *orthodoxy*, which emphasizes correct belief, and ritualism, the use of rituals.)

B. LOVE

a) **John stresses that love has been God’s will for His creatures (humanity) since the beginning (v.5).**

b) **Love entails obedience to God’s commands (v.6).**

Love and obedience = inseparable.

Grace is free but it is not cheap.

To love God is demanding.

2. PROBLEMS AND HOW TO COPE WITH THEM (v.7-11)

A. HOW TO RESIST FALSE TEACHING

We are able to resist false teaching when we have the standard by which to measure it, i.e.; Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (v.7).

B. HOW TO RELATE TO FALSE TEACHERS

a) John warns that many deceivers have gone out into the world. (False evangelists.) (Anti Christs.)

With that in mind, John helps the Christians in two ways as they relate to false teachers.

i) **“Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for” (v.8).**

There is a danger that the believer is deceived by the false teaching and consequently loses out on the reward that is the salvation promised by God.

John repeats the warning in v.9 **“Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ”.**

Itchy ears like to be tickled; **Stay with the apostolic teaching.**

ii) Do not take a false teacher into your home (v.10-11).

Do not give false teachers a base to work from. Be kind but do not give them a platform to work from.

3 JOHN

LEARNING BY EXAMPLE

3 John was written by the elder (the apostle John) to Gaius (**v.1**) – member of a church.

John reminded Gaius of the possible abuse of his hospitality by those in the church who opposed the apostolic authority.

The letter brings before us four people. Three of them are worthy examples to be followed. One of them must not be followed.

1. JOHN – A FATHERLY CHRISTIAN (v.1-2a)

A. LOVE IN THE TRUTH (v.1)

* **The apostle John was completely committed to Gaius, because Gaius was committed to the truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ.**

B. PRAYER FOR WELL-BEING (v.2)

John prayed for Gaius that his physical well-being would be matched by the progress of his walk with the Lord.

C. AFFIRMING AND ENCOURAGING GAIUS (v.3a)

John commends Gaius for his stand for the truth.

2. GAIUS – A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN (v.3-8)

A. FAITHFUL TO THE TRUTH (v.3-4)

a) **He believed the truth.** (Jesus as the Son of God the apostolic truth).

b) **He walked the truth.** His conduct accorded with the truth.
See Eph. 4 – **“Live a life worthy of the call which you have received.”**

B. FAITHFUL IN HIS LOVE FOR THE BRETHERN (v.5-8)

Gaius is commended for sharing hospitality to the itinerant preachers of the true apostolic message.

a) **Gaius’ hospitality was based on the following:**

i) The Brethren (itinerant preachers) were ambassadors for Christ.

ii) The Brethren could not depend on support from the pagans (**v.7b**)
“Receiving no help from the pagans.”

It is up to believers to support the propagation of the message of Jesus.

iii) The Brethren were co-workers for the truth (**v.8**).

b) **Gaius’ hospitality was to be “in a manner worthy of God”.**

John is encouraging Gaius to give them financial support when they leave to go to another place.

3. DIOTREPHES - A DIVISIVE CHRISTIAN (v.9-10)

John had already written to the church (v.9) in an attempt to resolve the crisis precipitated by Diotrephes.

That had failed.

So this description of Diotrephes stands as a warning of a Christian that divides.

A. HE LOVED TO BE FIRST

C. HE REJECTED AUTHORITY (v.9)

Diotrephes broke away from the apostolic fellowship.

Independence is not biblical; *INTERDEPENDENCE* IS.

D. HE GOSSIPED MALICIOUSLY (v.10a)

He undermined the apostolic fellowship by spreading untruths about the apostle.

D. HE FORMED A CLIQUE (v.10b)

4. DEMETRIUS – A REPUTABLE CHRISTIAN (v.11-12)

Demetrius (perhaps one of the itinerant preachers) sent with this letter.

John describes him as a genuine Christian.

His reputation was:

A. SPOKEN OF BY EVERYONE

B. SPOKEN OF “EVEN BY THE TRUTH ITSELF”

This means that the genuineness of Demetrius did not need the evidence of men. It was self-evident.

The truth he professed with his lips was revealed in his conduct.

C. SPOKEN OF BY THE APOSTLE HIMSELF