

## 1 John

- Reason for writing: 1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.
  - Knowing is based on evidence. All else is speculation.
  - Being granted eternal life is based on faith.
  - Knowing that we have eternal life is based on the evidence produced by the work of the Spirit that is given to the faithful.
  - The work of the Spirit is beyond human ability.
- Result of writing: 1 John 1:4 And these things we write to you that our joy may be full.
- Question 1: Whom does God identify as “those who believe.”
- Question 2: How closely must we match the description to qualify as believers?
- Question 3: What topics does John address so that we can know we have eternal life?
- Question 4: What contrasts does John draw between real hope and false hope?
- Note: The topics do not stand alone, but must be taken together to constitute how we may know legitimately that we have eternal life.
- 1:1 – 4 Evidence.
  - What we have heard, seen, and handled: the only religion based on evidence.
  - Eternal life was with the Father and was physically exposed to them.
  - Fellowship with each other and God is the goal.
  - Believers are those who depend on the evidence that God gave.
  - We know we have eternal life because of the physical evidence about Jesus.
- 1:5 – 2:2 Self-deception versus reality
  - What does “walk in darkness” mean?
    - The answer must be something the original readers could understand easily.
    - More than one application may be appropriate.
    - As a generalization, darkness is the opposite of light. They are mutually exclusive.
    - One cannot have fellowship with God and walk in darkness at the same time.
    - Claiming to have no sin of which to be forgiven is to walk in darkness.
  - How is “Walk in the light” illustrated?
    - “Practicing the truth.” What is that?
      - Truth is God’s version of reality. The contrast is “lie.”
      - Practicing truth is making choices based on reality, not based on deception of myself, others, or God.
    - “Fellowship with one another” is spiritual connectedness.
    - “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”
      - Some insert legalism by saying that the blood of Jesus continuously cleanses us. That could only be true if we were continuously judged by behavior.
      - Cleansing from sin is a one-time event. After a believer has been bought out of the works system, re-purchase would only be needed if that believer went back to law (or otherwise abandoned faith). After cleansing, bad choices cause ineffective evangelism, grief by God, and a dirty Temple, none of which require a sacrifice to buy us back, but rather a return from uncleanness.
    - John wrote neither to discourage because of the certainty of future bad choices, nor to make sin of no consequence, but to prevent future sins by being realistic.
    - If we do choose badly,
      - “We have an Advocate with the Father”
        - Only John uses this word (John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7): the Spirit that dwells in us.
        - Some of the jobs of the Spirit that relate to “if anyone sins”
          - Overcome through Jesus and the Spirit (Romans 7:25, 8:9 – 14, Galatians 5:16, 1 John 5:4)

## 1 John

- Partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)
  - The Spirit helps our weak prayers (Romans 8:26 – 27)
  - No temptation too great (1 Corinthians 10:13)
  - The preposition is more like “towards” than “with.” We have a Helper that moves us toward the Father. This word is not used in a courtroom sense in the New Testament. The need for a defense attorney has passed.
  - Remembering that the Spirit dwells in us causes us to rely on the promises of God rather than on ourselves to overcome sin.
- Jesus is the propitiation for our sins
  - Propitiation is used only in Romans 3:25, Hebrews 9:5, 1 John 2:2, and 1 John 4:10.
  - This is the word used in the Septuagint for the mercy seat, the lid of the Ark with the two cherubim at which the High Priest met God annually on Yom Kippur.
  - The fact that Jesus is the “mercy seat,” the place where we meet God, renews our incentive to overcome sin.
- This offer applies to all. What makes it work for us?
  - Therefore, believers live in reality, are spiritually connected, admit that they sinned, and continue to put away sin through the power of the indwelling Spirit.
  - We know we have eternal life if we are transparent, real, honest, and depend on the Spirit to enable us to overcome.
- 2:3 – 2:11 Real fruit
  - Know that you know
    - Know Him, in Him, and abide in Him are all parallel (3, 5, 6)
    - By keeping His commandments (3)
    - When God’s version of love becomes consistent in us (5) (*cf.* Romans 5:5)
    - When we walk as He walked (6)
    - Living in light (9)
    - No cause for stumbling (9) (*cf.* Luke 17:1 – 2)
  - Self-deception
    - Not keeping His commandments (4)
    - The opposite of the list above
    - Hate (9, 11)
  - We know we have eternal life when we see the product of the Spirit in us.
- 2:12 – 14 Motivations to confidence
  - We are forgiven not for our sake but because of the essential nature of Jesus (12)
  - We may have confidence because we overcome (13 – 14)
- 2:15 – 28 How to have confidence despite the appeal of the world
  - Evaluate the objects of your love (15 – 16)
  - The world is short term (17)
  - Jesus talked about this period. Believe Him. (18) (Matthew 24:21 – 22)
  - Those who depart were not really faithful (19)
  - The Spirit has given us understanding (20 – 21, 27)
  - You do not need a re-start. Continue. (24)
  - The Spirit teaches you. Teachers are a convenience, not a necessity. (27)
  - Trust God’s many promises. Not knowing or not trusting those promises leads to self-doubt, which makes us susceptible to deception.
  - We know we have eternal life when we gain understanding through the Spirit.
- 3:1 – 9 Choices: Hope versus deception
  - Note: the difference between hope and deception is evidence (1:1 – 3)

## 1 John

- Unbelievers do not understand choosing because of the love of God and our hope of being like Him (1), which is why so many rejected Jesus.
- We choose to be like Him (2 – 3). Those who choose sin do not know Him (4 – 6).
- The Spirit that dwells in us, His seed, motivates our choices (9). Those who choose sin are like Satan and further his work (8).
- Any other contrast is deception (7).
- 3:10 – 18 Choices: Love versus hate
  - Love: doing what is best for the other person without regard to the effect on me.
  - In the same way as choosing good or bad behavior illustrates to whom we belong, so does how we choose to affect others (10).
  - We know we have eternal life when we see ourselves choosing based on the needs of others (14).
  - Note: Three transformations (1) death to life, (2) the process of character change as in 2 Corinthians 3:18, and (3) when we are finally finished as in 3:2.
  - The standard of love to which we attain is Jesus' love (16). Note that even good human relationships can hinder this attainment (1 Corinthians 7:32 – 34).
  - Hate is not necessarily to act against, but also to fail to act (17).
  - Be consistent (18).
- 3:19 – 21 Legitimate confidence versus self-doubt
  - Our past choices that were based on love give us confidence (19, 21).
  - But, not all our choices are good, so remember the Helper (2:1).
  - We have a legitimate confidence despite our missteps because of that Helper (2:1) and the fact that God knows the real me (20). Knowing the real me can be good news or bad news.
- 3:22 – 24 Confidence based on the humanly impossible
  - When prayer works, when the humanly impossible happens (22), we gain confidence.
  - Faith and love are the commandments; behavior is the result (23).
  - When we accomplish that which is humanly impossible, we have confidence (24).
- 4:1 – 6 The spirit of truth versus the spirit of error
  - Test the spirits (1)
    - A mark of believers is skepticism
    - How do we “test the spirits” today?
  - Jesus came in the flesh (2 – 3)
    - What teaching qualifies as “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh”?
      - Hebrews 4:15 “tempted in all points as (like) we are”
      - Romans 8:3 “in the likeness of sinful flesh”
      - Hebrews 2:17 “He had to be made like His brethren”
      - Philippians 2:7 “coming in the likeness of men”
      - Hebrews 7:15 “in the likeness of Melchizedek”
      - James 3:9 “men...who have been made in the likeness of God”
      - James 5:17 “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours”
      - “Like” or “likeness” was used repeatedly by Jesus to introduce a parable about the Kingdom.
      - Acts 14:15 Paul and Barnabas said they were “like” the Lycaonians.
      - Romans 6:5 If we are united in the likeness of His death...
      - Galatians 5:21 A list of bad behaviors “and such like”
      - Romans 9:29 “We would have become like Sodom”
      - Summary: “Like” us in the characteristics in view, not the details.
    - What fleshly characteristics does John mention in this letter?
      - 1:1 – 3 Seen, heard, and handled
      - 1:5 In Him is no darkness

## 1 John

- 1:7 His blood cleanses
- 2:6 We are expected to walk as He walked
- 3:16 We are to lay down our lives as He laid down His life for us
- What problems are likely for groups that have an inaccurate view of Jesus' humanity?
- Overcoming the obvious power of Satan on earth proves we are of God (4).
- Hearing those "of the world" versus hearing "those of God" (4:5 – 6)
  - What examples of "of the world" thinking did John give in this letter?
    - 1:8, 10 Saying we have no sin
    - 2:4 Not keeping His commandments
    - 2:9, 11, 3:15, 17, 4:20 Hate
    - 2:15 – 16 Loving the world
    - 2:22 Denies that Jesus is the Christ
    - 3:6 – 8 Choosing sin
    - 3:10 Not practicing righteousness
    - 4:3 Jesus did not come in the flesh
    - 5:10 – 11 Denying that eternal life is "in" Jesus
  - How do we distinguish "those of the world" who do not fall into these examples, who sound like "those of God"?
    - 2:14, 2:20, 2:27, 3:9, 3:14, 3:24, 4:4, 4:13, 5:10 and others. We are to rely on the Spirit (the Word, Jesus, God) that dwells in us, and the humanly impossible accomplishments of the past.
    - How does this impact authority figures in the church?
    - What if I am sincerely wrong and mistakenly follow those "of the world"?
- 4:7 – 21 True love versus fake love
  - Characteristics of the love we are to imitate
    - Note: This love is doing what is best for others without regard to its effect on me.
    - (11) Love one another
    - (15) Announcing Jesus as the Son of God
    - (17) Boldness in the day of judgment
    - (17) As He is, so are we in this world (note: "is", not "was")
    - (18) Lack of fear
    - (19) We love others because He first loved us
  - How does this relate to church practices, organization, and doctrines?
  - We know we have eternal life when:
    - (8) When we see ourselves exercising God's version of love.
    - (11, 19) When we love others because God loved us.
    - (13) When we see the Spirit accomplishing the humanly impossible through us
- 5:1 – 5 Overcoming is the key to knowing we are born of God
  - (1) When we love the brethren, we know we are of God. Attributes of that love are:
    - 2:5 Whoever keeps His word
    - 3:16 When we lay down our lives for the brethren
    - 3:17 When we meet the physical needs of the brethren
    - 4:12 – 13 Consistent love as a result of the indwelling Spirit
    - 4:17 We have boldness in the Day of Judgment...as He is, so are we in this world.
    - 4:18 No fear
    - 4:19 We love because He first loved us
    - 4:20 No hate
  - (2) We know we love the brethren when we keep His commandments (see 3:23 – 24)
  - (3) Not burdensome (contrast Matthew 23:4, Luke 11:46)
  - (4 – 5) Only believers can overcome the world (2:14, 2:20, 2:27, 3:9, 3:24, 4:4, 4:13, 5:10)

## 1 John

- 5:6 – 12 The point of all this is:
  - The evidence all points the same direction (consistent: perfect)
    - The Spirit – all the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit from Jesus' miracles to those of the first century church
    - The Water – Jesus life on earth, sanctified
    - The Blood – Jesus sacrifice
  - The evidence is in us (the Spirit, our sanctification, as living sacrifices)
  - We possess eternal life now (not just later).
- 5:14 – 21 Confidence
  - (14 – 15) By asking, we express confidence
  - (14) According to His will (appended)
  - (16 – 17) We can ask for forgiveness for others and get it
  - (18 – 19) We overcome despite the greatest power of evil
  - (20) We know
    - Jesus has come
    - We understand the will of God
    - We know Jesus
    - We are in Jesus
- 5:21 Our part is to avoid deception