



## Intro to 1 John

Have you ever wanted a clear and concise description of what a Christian life should look like? Look no further. Join us for **1 John: Forgiveness, Faithfulness, & Love.**

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### teachingnotes

\* All Scripture is from CSB (Christian Standard Bible) unless otherwise noted.

#### **THE AUTHOR OF THIS WRITING**

Of all the New Testament letters (not including the gospels), only 1, 2, 3 John & Hebrews have no author's name attached to the writing in their salutations (2 & 3 John simply have "elder").

- **Internal Evidence** - what is found *IN THE TEXT* - is super similar in writing style and terms to the gospel we attribute to the apostle John.
  - **External Evidence** - Early Christians consistently ascribe the authorship of what we call the Gospel of John & 1 John, to the apostle John.<sup>1</sup>
- 🕒 If this is the case, then we are about to read from one of the men who spent hours and hours with Jesus, hearing Him teach, watching Him heal, hearing Him pray, watching Him die, and seeing Him risen from the dead and ascend into the clouds.

#### **THE AUDIENCE OF THIS WRITING**

It is likely that John is writing believers in Ephesus, where **Irenaeus** (2nd century theologian) notes John wrote his gospel.

*John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.*<sup>2</sup>

If John the apostle is the author of Revelation, it is noteworthy that Revelation was sent to 7 churches in Asia Minor, including Ephesus.

**John's four purposes for his writing** (noted by Danny Akin)<sup>3</sup>:

1. "We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete." (1:4).
2. "I am writing you these things so that you may not sin." (2:1).
3. "I have written these things to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you." (2:26)
4. "I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." (5:13).

False teaching was seeping into the church, and some who affirmed this false teaching had already abandoned the church (1 John 2:19).

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**1 John 2:19** They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, vol. 38, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, "Irenaeus against Heresies," in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 414.

<sup>3</sup> Akin, 31-32.

**What was this false teaching?** All these deceiving doctrines misidentified who Jesus was, either overemphasizing the HUMANITY of Jesus or overemphasizing the DEITY of Jesus.

- **Cerinthus**, a contemporary of John (the author of this letter), taught that Jesus was an extremely righteous man, but *just a man*. **Irenaeus**, wrote that Cerinthus “*represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin*”, believing the Jesus was the biological son of Mary and Joseph.<sup>4</sup> Cerinthus taught that the Christ spirit descended on the man Jesus at His baptism, but left Him before the crucifixion,<sup>5</sup> since *the Christ* remained incapable of suffering as a spiritual being.
- **Docetists** (from Greek verb *dokeō* meaning “to seem,” or “to appear”) taught that Jesus only seemed/appeared to have a body, but that he was really a spirit, thus denying the incarnation of Jesus - that God put on skin and was born to a virgin.
- **Jews who didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah** would have only viewed Jesus as a man, a miracle-worker, or false teacher - but only a man.

Look how John comes out swinging against this false teaching that Jesus was just a man or some sort of ghost.

**1 John 1:1-2** What was from the beginning, what we have **heard**, what we have **seen** with our eyes, what we have observed and have **touched** with our hands, concerning **the word of life**— that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you **the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us**—

What is **the word of life...the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us**? This is Jesus. John had used the same idea to open up his gospel, writing “*In the beginning was the word.*” (Jn 1:1) Later John clarifies who “the Word” is.

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**John 1:14** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the **one and only Son from the Father**, full of grace and truth.

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The **word of life, the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us**

**X** is not, as **Cerinthus** claimed, just a man who was empowered by the spirit of Messiah. Jesus IS the Messiah - the eternal one - God the Son.

**X** Neither was Jesus some sort of ghost like the Docetists claimed. John and the first followers of Jesus had **heard, seen, & touched** Jesus.

**X** Had John come face to face with these false teachers he might have asked, “*Were you every actually in the presence of Jesus? Because I WAS! Were you THERE when Jesus appeared to many - physically resurrected from the dead? Because I WAS!! I went to the tomb where His VERY REAL BODY had been buried. But on that Sunday morning, it wasn't there anymore! And then...HE APPEARED. And He told us...*”

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**Luke 24:39-42** Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself! **Touch me** and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.” Having said this, **he showed them his hands and feet**. But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” So they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and he took it and **ate in their presence**.

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Jesus was no “ghost” or spirit who simply ‘seemed’ to have a physical body. Jesus had a real, resurrected body.

\* Side note: Jehovah’s Witness are taught that Jesus resurrected as a “spirit creature”.<sup>6</sup>

**1 John 1:1-2** What was from the beginning, what we have **heard**, what we have **seen** with our eyes, what we have observed and have **touched** with our hands, concerning **the word of life**— that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you **the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us**—

**X** **David Allen** writes that in this short prologue “The ‘Son of Thunder,’ as Jesus once called him, summarizes God’s revelation of Christ and in so doing takes on the world of philosophy in his day and wrestles it to the mat.”<sup>7</sup>

**Jesus was fully human, but He was also fully divine.**

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<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, 352.

<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur, 1, 2, 3 John, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 8.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/jesus-body/>

<sup>7</sup> David L. Allen, 1-3 John: Fellowship in God’s Family, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 29.

**WHY** he's writing **WHAT** he's writing:

**1 John 1:3-4** what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, **so that you may also have fellowship with us**; and indeed **our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ**. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

In all of John's writings (1,2,3 John & his Gospel), this term - **fellowship** - is only found 4 times - all in 1 John (1:3, 6, 7).<sup>8</sup>

🕒 This Greek term is **koinonia**, meaning *a spiritual partnership between those who have the same Spirit living in them*.

🌟 **John MacArthur** says fellowship "*is the mutual life and love of those who are one in spirit (1 Cor. 6:17; cf. Eph. 5:30-32).*"<sup>9</sup>

Those who have fellowship **with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ** are part of the same spiritual family.

John is writing this letter as 1) some are falling to false teaching and 2) others don't love their brothers. John wants them to return to their spiritual partnership, which brings fulfillment/completion and great **joy**.

❓ **Who are the most joyful believers you know?**



**Fellowship with God** with Scriptures, prayer, and singing.

**Fellowship with another same sex believer**. Catch up with one another; share what God is doing in your life; share prayer needs & pray together.

## heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- \* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- \* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Steve & Debbie Bass (673-7952), Freddy & Joyce Howard (973-0047), Jere & Darlene Burnette (673-1888) , Fain & Linda Poppell (464-1282) , Jim & Derita Pinkard (229-834-4307), or Boss & Amelia Mulkey (464-6717).

<sup>8</sup> Colin G. Kruse, The Letters of John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 59.

<sup>9</sup> John MacArthur, *1, 2, 3 John, MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 18-19.