

“That You May Know”

(1 John)

Introduction

➤ The book of “1 John” is a powerful, terribly and wonderfully, convicting book of the Bible. It is also quite unusual. It is a letter, but also a sermon. It is ordered and organized, and yet at times seems more random and proverbial. It is extremely hard-hitting and provocative, and yet also deeply encouraging and positive.

✓ Illust: “The rhetoric of 1 John is challenging. John rarely sustains a clear line of argument for more than a few lines or verses. He wanders from subject to subject, unencumbered by any discernible outline. Yet if he has no plan, he does follow a pattern: after leaving a subject he often returns to it. His style of thought has been termed circular rather than linear. It has also been termed symphonic, in that he states themes, moves away from them, and then revisits them with variations” (*ESV Study Bible*;

Introduction to 1 John: “Style and Substance”).

➤ Where most of the New Testament books (which were actually letters) begin with a formal salutation, and end with benediction, the book of “1 John” does neither. What we have with “1 John” however, is a rather simple and straightforward approach to the Christian life. It is a book of stark “black and white” contrasts: love and hatred, light and darkness, truth and lies, righteousness and sin, Christ and the antichrists, the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world, children of God and children of the devil. This book has been rightly regarded as “the basics of Christianity”, or the “fundamentals of the faith.”

Clearly, as Scripture, “1 John” is a book inspired (“*breathed out*”) by the Holy Spirit of God and therefore “... *profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*” so that every Christian “*may be complete, equipped for every good work*” (2Tim.3:16-17; cf. 2Pet.1:20-21).

➤ Here are some things we think we know about the book of “1 John”:

Author ~ While there is no “internal evidence” to absolutely identify the (human) author of “1 John”, early church records ascribe that this book was written by the apostle John – who was in the “inner circle” of Christ’s apostles, along with Peter and John’s brother James (see Matt.10:2; Jesus gave James and John the name “*Sons of Thunder*”, Mk.3:17). John’s anonymity is consistent with his writing of the Gospel that bears his name (referring to himself as “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*”; Jn.13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20). John also wrote 2 and 3 John, as well as the book of Revelation (Rev.1:1).

Date ~ We know that the apostle John, unlike the rest of the apostles, lived to an old age (Judas committed suicide, and the rest of the apostles were – according to Scripture and historical records – were martyred). John was probably about 90 years old when he wrote the book of “1 John”, which places him in Ephesus, in Asia Minor (presuming he wrote it before he wrote Revelation). Most conservative scholars date the writing of “1 John” to around 90-95 A.D. (Revelation written from Patmos, presumably around 95-96 A.D.).

Audience ~ Little is known about those to whom John was writing, except for the fact that they were Christians (see 2:12-14, 19; 3:1; 5:13). Believing that John wrote this book while in Ephesus, it is likely that it was to be circulated among the churches in Asia Minor (perhaps specifically to the “*seven churches*” mentioned in Revelation (see Rev.1:4, 11).

Subjects/Themes ~ The relatively short book of “1 John” covers many biblical subjects and doctrinal themes. It is interesting to note the number of repeated words in “1 John.” For example, in this short book (only five chapters, i.e., 105 verses), variant forms of the word “know” (*ginōskō/oīda*) are used over 40 times. The only significant words with a higher count are “God” (63x), and variant forms of the word “love” (52x). This is important as we seek to understand John’s purpose in writing this book. He wants his readers to know the truth – the truth about God, the truth about Jesus Christ, the truth about salvation, and the truth about what it means to be a follower of Christ. Throughout this book, John declares the reasons why he is writing this book. Perhaps the key verse to this book is found at the end:

1 John 5:20 ~ “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”

- Thus, the book of “1 John” serves as a divinely inspired instruction manual of what it means to be a true Christian – i.e. what it means to “*abide in*” Christ (and to have Christ abide in us); what it means to be “*children of God*”; what it means to truly “*believe*” in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; what it means to have “*eternal life*.”
- This morning, I want to preach through the entire book of “1 John” in one sermon. I think it is important for us to get an overview of the forest, before we walk among the trees. There are many ways in which a person could preach through the book of “1 John” in one sermon (e.g., some divide the book into two main parts: God is light, and God is love). As stated already, this book is more circular/spiral than linear, and covers a number of different/repeated topics. For our time this morning, I want to highlight eight main truths that we must know from the book of “1 John.”

1. We need to know that Jesus Christ is the incarnate, one and only, Son of God.

- The first truth that John proclaimed was the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the incarnate Son of God. Simply put, the word “incarnate” means to become flesh. When we talk about the Incarnation of Christ, we are referring to the fact that the Son of God took on human flesh, becoming Jesus the Christ – fully God and fully man (Col.1:19; 2:9).

1 John 1:1-3 ~ “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 – ²the life was made manifest, 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 – ³that 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.”

1 John 4:2 ~ “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God”

1 John 4:9 ~ “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.”

1 John 5:20 ~ “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”

- John was not merely writing some doctrinal statement, he was giving a first-hand eye-witness testimony that Jesus was indeed the Christ, in the flesh, the one and only Son of God.

John 1:1-3 ~ “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ... ¹⁴And 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.” (see Jn.3:16, 18)

Matt 3:17 ~ “and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”

Matt 17:5 ~ “He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’”

- The Son is not merely a reflection of God, or merely similar to God. He is the exact and definitive representation of God’s divine being. Unlike every other human being, Jesus is the full and exact

manifestation of God's divine being. Furthermore, unlike every other human being, Jesus is sinless and therefore unmarred by sin and therefore He is not only the full and exact manifestation of God's divine being, but also the perfect manifestation of God's divine nature. Scripture tells us that in His humanity Jesus willingly divested Himself of some of the divine rights and privileges He had as God in order to be born as a human (Phil.2:6-8), but at no point did He ever cease to be God in any way or to any degree (God retrained, not God reduced). Jesus is the Incarnate Son of God – fully God and fully man.

2. We need to know that all humans are sinful and depraved.

➤ It is clear, from reading/studying God's Word that every one of us is utterly depraved (by nature and by choice), and desperately in need of God's saving grace (cf. Rom.3:23; 6:23). But we tend to want to minimize ("I'm not that bad"), rationalize ("I'm not as bad as most people"), or justify ("It's not my fault that I'm bad") our sin away. The prevailing ethic in our society today is that people are basically good, and only a relative few are bad or evil.

However, as we read God's Word (and look sincerely into our own hearts) we find that we are depraved sinners in desperate need of God's saving grace. No human being is innately good. Apart from Christ, no one deserves (or can earn) salvation. The book of "1 John" underscores our sinful depravity apart from Christ.

1 John 1:5-10 ~ "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. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But 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. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

1 John 5:19 ~ "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

➤ Scripture adamantly, repeatedly, declares that apart from Christ no one is sinless, no one is righteous:

Jer 17:9 ~ "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

Rom 3:9-12, 23 ~ "... both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.' ... ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

➤ In the Bible, God 'pulls no punches' when describing the dreadful state of the sinner. Unfortunately, we live in a day when many preachers are refusing to preach on sin, or even use words like sin in their sermons (preferring instead to talk about "sickness", "error" or "weakness", or not address our sin problem at all). God's Word, however, tells it like it is – not sparing the truth to protect our egos, but proclaiming the truth to save our souls.

3. We need to know that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins.

➤ The Bible tells us that Jesus was tempted, but He never gave in to any temptation (2Cor.5:21). Because He was tempted, in every way that we are, He is able to completely sympathize with our weakness (Heb.4:15). Furthermore, because He was sinless, He was able to be the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all who would ever believe.

1 John 2:1-2 ~ "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate [*paraklētos*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ²He is the propitiation [*hilasmos*; atoning sacrifice, sin offering] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 John 3:5 ~ “You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.”

1 John 3:16 ~ “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

1 John 4:10 ~ “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation [*hilasmos*] for our sins.”

1 John 4:14 ~ “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.”

1 John 4:19 ~ “We love because he first loved us.”

1 John 5:11 ~ “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

➤ Jesus’ perfect sacrifice not only appeased God’s just wrath against sin, but it also freed us from the penalty and power of sin (and one day, in eternity, from the presence of sin). He accomplished this through His righteous life, and substitutionary death on the cross.

1 Peter 2:24 ~ “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”

1 Peter 3:18 ~ “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit”

2 Cor 5:21 ~ “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

➤ Theologians refer to Christ’s crucifixion as His substitutionary or vicarious death. Which simply means that He died in our place, for our sins. He did not die for His own sins, because He was sinless (2Cor.5:21; Heb.7:26; 1Pet.2:22-24; 1Jn.3:5). Christ’s death on the cross completely and perfectly satisfied God’s wrath against our sin, for “*the wages of sin is death*” (Rom.6:23). This has been called “the great exchange” – Christ bearing the punishment and death for our unrighteousness while we receive the glory and reward for His righteousness.

4. We need to know that salvation (God’s forgiveness) comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

➤ Christians are saved by God’s grace alone, through faith alone and in Christ alone. We cannot earn our salvation by good works, nor can we keep our salvation by good works (Is.64:6). Good works are the natural, and supernatural, by-product of being saved. “We are not saved by good works, but unto good works.” Good works are not the means of our salvation, but the expression and evidence of it.

1 John 1:7-9 ~ “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. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 3:16 ~ “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

1 John 4:10 ~ “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

1 John 3:23 ~ “And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.”

1 John 5:1 ~ “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.”

1 John 5:4-5 ~ “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

1 John 5:12 ~ “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” (see 1Jn.5:10)

➤ Faith is the only God-ordained means of receiving God’s saving and grace (cf. Eph.2:8; Phil.3:9). True saving faith is more than the conscious admission that God or Jesus Christ existed. Nor is it simply a mental affirmation that history records Jesus lived on the earth and died on the cross. Nor is it a casual or superficial belief in the teachings of Scripture or Christian doctrine. True saving faith is more than a mental or intellectual exercise. It is the genuine belief and trust in God. To put it more specifically, in terms of Christian faith, one might define it in this way: true saving faith is the living conviction that Jesus in the Christ the Son of God, and the full trust and reliance upon Him as both Lord and Savior.

Eph 2:5-10 ~ “even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved ... ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (see Rom.5:1; Gal.2:16)

Titus 3:5-8 ~ “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

➤ The central truth of the Gospel is that Jesus is the Christ (i.e. the Messiah), the one and only Son of God and the one and only Savior from God. To believe the Gospel is to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, recognizing that you are a sinner, justly condemned by God, and in desperate need of God’s forgiveness that comes only through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

5. We need to know that rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is a rejection of God.

➤ A person cannot be right with God and wrong about Jesus. A person cannot truly know God unless they have come to know Him through Jesus Christ. Likewise, a person cannot be saved by God apart from the Savior who has come from God.

1 John 2:22-23 ~ “Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. ²³No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

1 John 4:2-3 ~ “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.”

1 John 5:10-12 ~ “Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

➤ This means those who believe in Jesus acknowledge and embrace the truth of God. To reject Jesus Christ is tantamount to calling God a liar (1Jn.5:10). A person can be devoutly religious, and yet utterly unsaved.

John 3:16-18 ~ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ... ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever

does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

John 3:36 ~ “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

➤ Again, a person cannot be right with God if they are not right with Jesus Christ. A person cannot truly know God the Father unless they have come to know Him through His Son Jesus Christ. Likewise, a person cannot be saved by God apart from the Savior who has come from God. Those who reject/hate Christ also reject/hate God.

6. We need to know that those who truly love God seek to obey the commands of God.

➤ Being a Christian means you are a follower of Christ, a “Christ-follower.” It means you belong to Jesus. In other words, you have abandoned your old life (that you lived without Him) and now live a new life (that is lived for Him). You are now in Christ! You no longer live for sin because you now live for Christ, and you no longer love sin because you now love Christ. For Christ has set you free from the power and penalty of sin.

1 John 1:6 ~ “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

1 John 2:3-6 ~ “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”

1 John 2:9-11 ~ “Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

1 John 3:4-10 ~ “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ¹⁰By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”

1 John 4:7-8, 20-21 ~ “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ... ²⁰If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

1 John 5:18 ~ “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

➤ All those who say they are Christians are not necessarily true followers of Christ. It is possible to be profess Christ, and yet not possess Christ (a person can be “in church”, but not truly “in Christ”). Today we have people who are known as “non-practicing Christians,” “nominal Christians,” “Sunday-only

Christians,” “Christmas and Easter (C & E) Christians” and even “carnal Christians” – all of whom the Bible identifies as non-Christians.

Declaring to be a Christian, or a disciple of Christ, does not make someone a true follower of Jesus Christ. While we may not be able to discern between true and false Christians, we can be assured that God knows the difference. God is neither ignorant, nor can He be deceived (Gal.6:7; Heb.4:13).

John 14:15 ~ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

John 15:14 ~ “You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

Luke 6:46 ~ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

- To be truly converted means that you have radically and fundamentally changed. This does not mean that Christians are perfect, or live sinlessly, but that they do not continue to live in sin (without genuine confession and repentance). When a person is saved, they have a new heart and a renewed mind – and the indwelling power and presence of God’s Holy Spirit – enabling and compelling them to live in obedience to God (Ezek.36:27; Rom.6:1-2; 8:7-8; Eph.2:10).

7. We need to know that false teachers will attempt to deceive Christians.

- As Christians, we must be constantly on guard against any false teaching; not judgmental or negatively critical, but knowledgeable and discerning. Christians cannot afford to be ignorant or gullible. We have been warned repeatedly to beware of false teachers – even within the church – and to not think that we are somehow immune to, or beyond, being deceived (see 1Cor.10:12).

1 John 2:18-27 ~ “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. ²⁰But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. ²¹I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. ²²Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. ²³No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise that he made to us – eternal life. ²⁶I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie – just as it has taught you, abide in him.”

1 John 4:1-3 ~ “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.”

- This is to be a wake-up call for every Christian. For the attacks against the Gospel will not only come from outside the church but also from inside the church – from without and from within. Christians, while not being judgmental, simply cannot afford to be gullible or undiscerning (Acts 17:11). Not everyone who professes to be a Christian, is actually a true believer in Christ (not every “Christian” ministry, church, artist, author, athlete or preacher is truly/faithfully Christ-centered, Bible-centered, and/or Gospel centered). We must always bear in mind that false believers can infiltrate the church in order to undermine the authority of God’s Word, distort the Gospel of Christ, and/or create division within the fellowship of believers (see Gal.1:6-9).

Matt 7:15 ~ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

Matt 24:11-13 ~ “And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ... ²⁴For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”

2 Peter 2:1-3 ~ “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”

Acts 20:28-30 ~ “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

➤ Satan loves/longs to counterfeit God’s truth (see Jn.8:44; 2Cor.11:14). Satan does not care what you believe as long as it is not the truth; he does not care how moral or religious you are as long as you are not a follower of Christ; he does not care what god you worship as long as it is not the one true God. As Christians, we must be discerning (Matt.10:16) and knowledgeable enough to examine all “Christian” teaching/preaching to see if it really comes from God (Acts 17:11).

8. We need to know that those who truly receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will be saved.

➤ Those who are truly in Christ remain in Christ, and those who seemingly walk away from Christ were never truly in Christ.

1 John 2:19 ~ “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”

1 John 2:24-25 ~ “Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise that he made to us – eternal life.”

1 John 3:1-3 ~ “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”

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.”

➤ The truth is, those who are truly saved are eternally saved – kept by God in Christ. The security of our salvation does not rest in our obedience, or even in our faithfulness or perseverance, but in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus not only saved us, but protects our salvation enabling us to persevere in our faith. While we are indeed called to abide in Christ (to hold onto Him), we must never forget that Christ also abides in us (He holds onto us). Though our grip may weaken and slip, Christ’s grip is firm and secure.

John 10:27-29 ~ “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

Rom 8:1 ~ “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Rom 8:37-39 ~ “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Phil 1:6 ~ “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Jude 24-25 ~ “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

➤ Christ keeps (protects) every true believer from being eternally marred or injured (Jd.1); every true believer is one who keeps himself (perseveres) in God’s love (Jd.21); and God keeps (secures) every true believer from suffering eternal loss (Jd.24). There is nothing we can do to obtain or sustain our salvation – it is an unmerited gift of God from first to last – yet we are called to persevere in our faith. Faithfulness, not complacency, is the right response to God’s gracious security!

✓ Illust: Spurgeon made the great observation that while Noah may have fallen in the ark, he never fell out of the ark: “All who were in the ark were safe. Nobody fell out of that divinely-appointed refuge; nobody was dragged out; nobody died in it; nobody was left to perish in it. All who went in came out unharmed. They were all preserved in it; they were all safely brought through the dread catastrophe. The ark preserved them all, and so will Jesus Christ preserve all in him. Whoever may come to him shall be secure. None of them shall perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand” (Charles H. Spurgeon; sermon: “Noah’s Flood”; March 5th, 1868).

Conclusion

➤ Writing words inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, words that are true and applicable for all time and all people, the apostle John exhorts us to know these truths about God, about His Son, and about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. We need to know that Jesus Christ is the incarnate, one and only, Son of God.
2. We need to know that all humans are sinful and depraved.
3. We need to know that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins.
4. We need to know that salvation (God’s forgiveness) comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.
5. We need to know that rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is a rejection of God.
6. We need to know that those who truly love God seek to obey the commands of God.
7. We need to know that false teachers will attempt to deceive Christians.
8. We need to know that those who truly receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will be saved.

➤ May we eagerly and earnestly embrace these truths, and be guided by them.