**1 John 1, 4/13/2018**

**Opening**

* Who was Apostle John? What can you tell about him?
  + What was the relationship between John and Jesus?
  + What are special when comparing the Book of John vs. the Books of Matthew, Mark and Luke? How did the Book of John start?
* What can you say about light and darkness in physics? In our minds?
  + Do you like light or darkness? Why?
  + How can be move out of darkness to the light?
* Do you remember what we discussed last time? 2 Peter 3. The day of the Lord will come. Final words.
* We now start a new book – 1 John. What do you know about it? What else had he written?

**Introduction to 1 John** (ESV Study Bible)

* Author: John the son of Zebedee, author of the Fourth Gospel, is the most likely candidate.
* Date: Early post-apostolic figures like Polycarp and Papias (c. A.D. 100) presuppose or cite 1 John in their writings. This suggests a date of composition no later than the 90s A.D. This dovetails with the testimony of church fathers that, shortly before A.D. 67, John joined other Christians in departing from Jerusalem prior to the destruction of the city by Rome. John reportedly resumed his apostolic ministry in the vicinity of the great but highly idolatrous city of Ephesus (in modern western Turkey). He likely wrote 1 John as an elder statesman of the faith in the last third of the first century, perhaps to churches in the surrounding region. This might have included towns like those mentioned alongside Ephesus in the opening chapters of Revelation: Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (Rev. 2:8–3:22).
* Theme: In 1 John the author calls readers back to the three basics of Christian life: true doctrine, obedient living, and fervent devotion. Because “God is light” (1:5), Christ’s followers overcome evildoers who seek to subvert them. The one who lives in and among them – God’s Son – is greater than the spirit of “the antichrist” now in the world (4:3–4). To believe in the name of the Son of God is to know the assurance of eternal life (5:13).
* Purpose, Occasion, and Background:
  + It is customary to understand 1 John as a response to the rise of an early form of Gnosticism. This was a religious mysticism that pirated Christian motifs to propagate an understanding of salvation based on esoteric “knowledge.” According to this view, redemption is through affirming the divine light already in the human soul, not through repentance of sin and faith in Christ’s death to bring about spiritual rebirth. Writings widely publicized in recent years, like the Gospel of Thomas and Gospel of Judas, for example, were products of Gnostic writers. But the heyday of Gnostic thought was the second through fifth centuries, well after the time the NT books were written. It can neither be proven nor ruled out that John had this movement in mind as he wrote.
  + John’s focus is positive, not polemical. His aim is redemptive, not reactionary. He urges readers to refine their theological understanding, sharpen their ethical rigor, and heighten their devotional intensity. That is, they must grow in faith, obedience, and love. Yet the letter is not a list of dos and don’ts. It is rather a manifesto of “Done!” – Jesus’ words “It is finished” (John 19:30) come to mind.
* Outline (ESV Study Bible)

1. God Is Light and Christ Is the Way ([1:1–2:6](https://www.esv.org/1+John+1-2%3A6/))
   1. Prologue ([1:1–4](https://www.esv.org/1+John+1%3A1-4/))
   2. God’s nature and human sin ([1:5–10](https://www.esv.org/1+John+1%3A5-10/))
   3. Jesus Christ in everyday life ([2:1–6](https://www.esv.org/1+John+2%3A1-6/))
2. The Abiding Commandment in a Transient World ([2:7–17](https://www.esv.org/1+John+2%3A7-17/))
   1. The primacy of love ([2:7–11](https://www.esv.org/1+John+2%3A7-11/))
   2. The confidence of God’s people ([2:12–14](https://www.esv.org/1+John+2%3A12-14/))
   3. The lure of this fleeting age ([2:15–17](https://www.esv.org/1+John+2%3A15-17/))
3. Overcoming Antichrist by Confession of the Son ([2:18–3:10](https://www.esv.org/1+John+2%3A18-3%3A10/))
   1. Warning and assurance ([2:18–27](https://www.esv.org/1+John+2%3A18-27/))
   2. Christians as children of God ([2:28–3:3](https://www.esv.org/1+John+2%3A28-3%3A3/))
   3. Children of God and the forsaking of sin ([3:4–10](https://www.esv.org/1+John+3%3A4-10/))
4. Overcoming Evil by Listening to the Apostle ([3:11–4:6](https://www.esv.org/1+John+3%3A11-4%3A6/))
   1. Overcoming Cain’s malice ([3:11–24](https://www.esv.org/1+John+3%3A11-24/))
   2. Overcoming the Antichrist’s deception ([4:1–6](https://www.esv.org/1+John+4%3A1-6/))
5. The Assurance of God through the Love of God ([4:7–21](https://www.esv.org/1+John+4%3A7-21/))
   1. The perfecting of God’s love ([4:7–12](https://www.esv.org/1+John+4%3A7-12/))
   2. The assurance of God’s Spirit ([4:13–21](https://www.esv.org/1+John+4%3A13-21/))
6. Faith in the Son as the Way to Life ([5:1–12](https://www.esv.org/1+John+5%3A1-12/))
   1. Faith keeps the commandments of God ([5:1–5](https://www.esv.org/1+John+5%3A1-5/))
   2. Faith receives the testimony of God ([5:6–12](https://www.esv.org/1+John+5%3A6-12/))
7. Final Call to Faith and Understanding ([5:13–21](https://www.esv.org/1+John+5%3A13-21/))
   1. The confidence that faith furnishes ([5:13](https://www.esv.org/1+John+5%3A13/))
   2. The prayer that faith enables ([5:14–17](https://www.esv.org/1+John+5%3A14-17/))
   3. The understanding that faith grants ([5:18–21](https://www.esv.org/1+John+5%3A18-21/))

**The Word of Life (1:1-4)**

* 1 John 1:1–2:6 God Is Light and Christ Is the Way. John begins his letter by directing attention to Christ’s divinity, incarnation, saving death, and intercessory ministry. He also stresses God’s ineffable brilliance (“light,” 1:5) and the ubiquity of human sin. ESV Study Bible.
* 1 John 1:1–4 Prologue. A dozen or so first-person plural references (“we,” “our,” “us”) highlight the eyewitness testimony of John and other early Christians, particularly the apostles. They know “fellowship with the Father and with his Son” (v. 3) and yearn to see it extend to readers. ESV Study Bible.
* 1 John 1:1 John is pointing to Christ’s preexistence. ESV Study Bible.
* 1 John 1:2 The repetition of made manifest (publicly seen and known) stresses the revelatory nature of Christ’s coming: he was sent from and revealed by God. ESV Study Bible.
* 1 John 1:3 John is moved to proclaim what he has witnessed in keeping with the commission he and other apostles received (Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 1:8). The purpose of this proclamation is not just forgiveness of people’s sins (as a simplified view of evangelism would have it) but is far richer, for the gospel message binds together those who receive it: so that you too may have fellowship with us. Yet the purpose is still richer than mere human fellowship, for believers’ fellowship is with the Father and with his Son. Such “fellowship” is personal communion with the Father made possible by the mediation of the Son. ESV Study Bible.
* Discussion
  + How important is to have fellowship with one another? With Jesus? How?
  + What is the correspondence in 2 Peter? 2 Peter 1:4. “you may become partakers of the divine nature.”
  + Try to phrase these four verses. Is that easy? Once done, can you see things clearer than before?

**Walking in the Light (1:5-10)**

* 1 John 1:5–10 God’s Nature and Human Sin. “God is light” (v. 5) reflects an OT background where “light” symbolizes both knowledge and purity. All of John’s writing flows from the reality of God in his spiritual perfection, moral excellence, and utter transcendence – his light (see 1 Tim. 6:16). This will contrast sharply with errant humans protesting their innocence (1 John 1:6, 8, 10). ESV Study Bible.
* 1 John 1:7 Walk in the light means to reflect God’s perfection (see v. 5) in the human sphere and includes both correct doctrine (truth) and moral purity (holiness). The symbolism of light as knowledge also implies that when Christians “walk in the light” their lives will be known, and will not contain hidden sins, falsehoods, or deception. Such walking “in the light” results in deep divine and human fellowship (see v. 3) and progressive cleansing from all sin. ESV Study Bible.
  + This verse links vv. 5, 6 on light/darkness and vv. 8-10 on sin/righteousness.
* Discussion
  + How importance is repentance in having fellowship with others and with Jesus?

**Wrapping up**

* Do we want to have fellowship with Christ or to repair our fellowship with Him? How and when?
* What are your favorite verses in this chapter?

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