

# I John

## Listen Up, Kids!

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### Introduction

- Writer:** The Apostle John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” also wrote the Gospel of John and Revelation. His writing style is clear, simple, direct, and profound in depth of content, highly philosophical. He weaves in major themes (light, love, truth) into his gospel and epistle which are completely different genres of literature.
- Date:** Likely written around **A.D. 85-95**, near the end of John’s life. The church was now a generation removed from Jesus’ earthly life and ministry, and distortions to the gospel (Gnosticism) are beginning to appear.
- Recipients:** Christian congregations, likely centered around Ephesus, who were dealing with erroneous teachers denying that Jesus was truly human and truly divine. John writes as a spiritual father to reassure these believers of their faith in the real, incarnate Christ.
- Purpose:** To provide assurance of salvation through faith in Jesus (**I John 5:13**).  
To combat false teaching, especially denial of incarnation (**I John 2:22; 4:2-3**)  
To encourage believers toward righteous living as a response to grace (**I John 2:3-6**).  
To emphasize powerfully love as the mark of true faith (**I John 3:11; 4:7-8**).  
To promote discernment and steadfastness in the truth (**I John 4:1-6**).
- Outline:** **I.** Reality of Incarnation (**I John 1:1-4**)  
**II.** The Christian life as fellowship with Father and Son (**I John 1:5-2:28**)  
**III.** The Christian as life as divine sonship (**I John 2:29-4:6**)  
**IV.** The Christian life is an integration of love, God’s for us and ours for neighbor, and faith in Christ  
**Conclusion:** Great Christian certainties (**I John 5:13-21**)
- Major Themes:**  
Light and Darkness – contrast between sin and truth, hate and love  
Love – not a mere feeling, but an active reflection of God’s love for us  
Truth – rooted in Christ, revealed by Spirit, tested by Word  
Fellowship – with God and each other through blood of Jesus  
Assurance – salvation is sure since it rests on Christ’s work, not ours

### I John 1:1-10

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup> The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may

have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> We write this to make our joy complete.

<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. <sup>7</sup> 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, purifies us from all sin.

<sup>8</sup> If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1. Why does John begin the letter by emphasizing what he's heard, seen, and touched? What's that say about the reality of Jesus incarnation to John and to us?
  - How does John refer to Jesus in **v. 2**?
  - How does John's eager certainty strengthen our confidence in the gospel all these years later?
2. John says, "We proclaim to you...so you may have fellowship with us." (**1:3**) What kind of fellowship is he talking about? How is the same fellowship expressed among us and how do we feel about that fellowship??
3. Similar to his gospel, John's epistle begins with vivid incorporation of light and dark. How much darkness is in God? What's that say about him and why's it so important to know that?
  - Right away, John gets black and white when it comes to our lives of faith! (**v. 6**) Do you ever walk in darkness? If so, what's that mean about you?
  - What's up the "if" in **v. 7**? How can we do that and what's it look like in your everyday life?
4. In what saving and excellent truth is presented in **v. 7** which gives peace and power?
5. We know it's dangerous to downplay and deny our sin. Why do we do it all the time?!
  - What assurance is given in **v. 9** when we are honest about our sin? How does **v. 10** preach law and gospel?