

GRACE LIFE FAMILY CHURCH

LOVE LETTERS TO THE CHURCH

Introduction to the letters to the Church from John

INTRO

The similarities between the beginning of this epistle and the Gospel of John are further evidence that they were written by the same person.

This epistle was written later than many of the books of the N.T. By this time the Gnostic teachings were becoming a factor that had to be dealt with. The Gnostics taught many errors.

One of them was that Jesus didn't come in the flesh. The Father just somehow made it appear that He was real. John dispels that in his opening sentence of this letter. He makes it clear that he had seen and heard Jesus and his hands had touched Him. He was real, and God was manifest in the flesh. Andrew Wommack's Living Commentary.

Author John/90 AD/5 years before banished to Patmos/wrote book of Revelation

Pastor/Overseer/of the church of Ephesus

Looking at Acts 19

Acts 19:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

² he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

³ And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

You would have to look at the previous chapter to know this Apollos came and preached in the first place but all he knew was up to John's baptism.

Acts 19:4-10 (NKJV)

⁴ Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

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- ⁵ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- ⁶ And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.
- ⁷ Now the men were about twelve in all.
- ⁸ And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.
- ⁹ But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.
- ¹⁰ And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, **both Jews and Greeks.**

- a) Underline Jews & Greeks because that is who makes up the church at Ephesus
 - a. Only knew what Apollos taught them
 - b. Not like Jerusalem Church (Jews)
 - c. Galatians (Gentile Church)
- b) Dr Cho first started church/teach on trinity/pictures look like the pagan gods – multiple arms etc.
 - a. Dr Cho not angry/because this is all they knew/what they came out of
- c) Might have a legal background/penticostal/

Gnosticism

The term *Gnosticism* is derived from the Greek word **gnosis**, meaning "to know" or "general knowledge."

Epigenesis -Epi – means Upon or higher, precise, and correct knowledge

- a. used in the NT of the knowledge of things ethical and divine
- b. Revelation coming from God's word

Fights were uprising because you had the Jews –

- Gnosticism by the reeks
- Jews digging out the Law / huge fight in the Church
 - One group/Jews/keep the law/hard time with Christianity
 - Other group came out of Hellenism Greek culture/brought in a mix

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- Jews diminished the Lord / hard time with Him being a man and God
- Other side of problem was the Greeks and the system of DUALISM
- Jews had a hard time seeing Jesus as God/just saw him as a man
- Greeks had a hard time seeing Jesus as a man/no problem seeing him as God

The book of 1st John is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). It is written by the Disciple/Apostle John around 85-95 A.D. probably from Ephesus.

Its purpose was to warn about the increasing threat of false teachings and to reassure Christians of their faith and love in Jesus Christ.

It was written to combat false teachings that had to do with the denial that Jesus had a genuine human body (1:1).

This Gnostic view of matter as being evil led to two responses, asceticism, or licentiousness.

He very clearly writes to give the true tests of a true Christian.

These tests also **contradicted the Gnostic licentious approach to Christianity**. He gives several means to measure the reality of one's conversion experience.

Beliefs of Gnosticism

Gnostic beliefs clashed strongly with accepted [Christian doctrine](#), causing early church leaders to be embroiled in heated debates over the issues. By the end of the second century, many Gnostics broke away or were expelled from the church. They formed alternative churches with belief systems deemed heretical by the Christian church.

While many variations in beliefs existed among the different Gnostic sects, the following key elements were seen in most of them.

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Dualism: Gnostics believed that the world was divided into the physical and spiritual realms. The created, material world (matter) is evil, and therefore in opposition to the world of the spirit, and that only the spirit is good. Adherents of Gnosticism often constructed an evil, lesser god and beings of the Old Testament to explain the creation of the world (matter) and considered Jesus Christ a wholly spiritual God.

God: Gnostic writings often describe God as incomprehensible and unknowable. This idea conflicts with Christianity's concept of a personal God who desires a relationship with human beings. Gnostics also separate the inferior god of creation from the superior god of redemption.

Salvation: Gnosticism claims hidden knowledge as the basis for salvation. Adherents believed that secret revelation frees the "divine spark" within humans, allowing the human soul to return to the divine realm of light in which it belongs. Gnostics, thus, divided Christians into two categories with one group being carnal (inferior) and the other being spiritual (superior). Only the superior, divinely enlightened persons could comprehend the secret teachings and obtain true salvation.

Christianity teaches that salvation is available to everyone, not just a special few and that it comes from [grace through faith](#) in [Jesus Christ \(Ephesians 2:8-9\)](#), and not from study or works. The only source of truth is the Bible, Christianity asserts.

Jesus Christ: Gnostics were divided on their beliefs about Jesus Christ. One view held that he only *appeared* to have human form but that he was actually spirit only. The other view contended that his divine spirit came upon his human body at [baptism](#) and departed before the [crucifixion](#). Christianity, on the other hand, holds that Jesus was fully man and fully God and that his human and divine natures were both present and necessary to provide a [suitable sacrifice](#) for humanity's [sin](#).

- Looking at some of the problems and the origin of this church
- Where the church began
- Many changes/power of God very strong/much change
- One of the most important chapters in the book of Acts

So this is how we are going to open up this study and the scripture.

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1 John 1:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--

² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

In the opening of this letter of John he hits the problem head on

- a) Both sides had the same problem “The Flesh”
- b) Both sides battle was with the nature of the flesh

Theme of all the letters 1,2,3 John is “LOVE”

- Love is the only way we are all going to get along together
- Flesh will rub you the wrong way
- Your flesh will rub somebody the wrong way
- Agape Love – World does not have.
- Agape brought over into the letters from the Gospel of John

COMMON THINGS IN BOTH BOOKS

- 1) Book of John
 - a. **Love of the Father** / both books have parallel scriptures
 - i. John 14:21 & 1 John 4:16
- 2) Both talk about the fact that the Son is Eternal
 - a. John 15:4
 - b. 1 John 3:24
- 3) The Indwelling of God (God lives in us)
 - a. John 14:20
 - b. 1 John 3:24
- 4) Forgiveness
 - a. John 15:3
 - b. 1 John 1:9
- 5) Eternal Life
 - a. John 17:2
 - b. 1 John 2:25
- 6) Righteousness
 - a. John 16:10

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- b. 1 John 2:29
- 7) Forgiveness of Sin (All Sin)
 - a. John 16:8
 - b. 1 John 1:8 & Ch. 3:4
- 8) Obedience / Platform for the demonstration of love/ Love demands a demonstration (Jesus Died on the Cross)
 - a. John 14:15
 - b. 1 John 2:3 & 3:10
- 9) Sanctification (walking in holiness)
 - a. John 15:19
 - b. 1 John 2:12 & 4:1

- 10) The Guarding of the Faith
 - a. John 17:8
 - b. 1 John 2:18 & 5:5

John 14:21 (NKJV)

²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

1 John 4:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

- a) It's especially important to note that loving Jesus isn't revealed in us keeping the Old Testament Law.
- b) That was an oppressive set of commands that no one could keep. Jesus said those who truly love Him would keep HIS commands.
- c) What were His commands? 1 John 3:23 says, "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (also see John 13:34).

Keeping the commandments doesn't make us love God or God love us. But loving God will make us keep the commandments.

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- John 14:21: Once again, this verse has been misinterpreted to say that keeping God's commandments will produce a love for God, but this verse is saying just the opposite. Loving God will produce keeping His commandments

START HERE.....

THEME OF CHAPTER ONE – Identifying our Enemies

- 1) Verse 1 & 2 John Identifies who Jesus Christ is.
 - a. He is GOD
 - b. He is Man
 - c. This is our foundation / Jesus being a God/Man is our entryway into heaven

- 2) Look at JOB 9

Job 9:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Then Job answered and said:

² "Truly I know *it is* so, But how can a man be righteous before God?"

³ If one wished to contend with Him, He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand.

Job is saying –

- God is holy/ I'm Not
- God is Mighty / I'm not
- He could ask a thousand questions / not able to answer even one of them

Job 9:33 (NKJV)

³³ Nor is there any mediator between us, *Who* may lay his hand on us both.

- 1 Tim. One MEDIATOR/the MAN Christ Jesus/Has His hand upon us both
- No one else can be our mediator/had to be some one who was born without the nature of the flesh.

1 John 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ That which **was** from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen

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with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--

- I. Was (GR. AMI) Past tense/something which has always been.
 - a. Could translate (**That which existed from eternity past**)
 - b. Exactly the way he opened the book of John

John 1:1-5 (NKJV)

¹ In the beginning **was** the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John 1:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

- II. He existed from eternity past
 - a. But a time came when he entered into earth and became a man and became flesh.
 - b. God can suddenly be touched/handled/seen/heard
 - c. John 1 His Deity and His humanity was brought our and this was the problem in the church.

III. Back to 1 John

- I. Everything Jesus did he did to be about the will of God to be about His Fathers business. From the cradle to the grave.
- II. His physical body was a product of God but also everything He said and everything He did was of His Father
 - a. We have **HEARD Him**--
 - i. Jesus preaching / Sermon on the Mount/Sea of Galilee /In the temple
 - ii. God speaking- The Words I speak are the Fathers

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- b. We have **SEEN Him**
 - i. Multitudes watched Him walk on water/do miracles/heal thousands/feed 5000/raise the dead
 - c. We have **HANDLED Him**
 - i. The woman with the issue of blood/Thomas/Mary washed his feet
 - ii. Jesus touched them/healed them/walked with them/He was and is a friend to sinners
 - d. Take it a step further than Thomas touching him
 - i. Blessed are those who believe and have not seen
 - 1. Heard
 - 2. Talked to
 - 3. Handled
 - ii. That's Us/Our Generation
- III. People say, "Oh I would have loved to have been there when Jesus walked the earth" Greater blessing those who have not seen YET BELIEVED
- IV. We Have to Believe His Word First of All
- a. Seeing, Handling, Hearing, all wonderful! But His Word is primary
 - b. Thank God for those who see visions, hear His voice but

You won't have that if you don't start believing His Word right here to base what you see and hear on.

2 Peter 1:16-19 (KJV)

¹⁶ For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, **but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.**

¹⁷ For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a **voice to him** from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

¹⁸ And this **voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.**

- People of the Church "WOW, what a pastor we have!"

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¹⁹ **We have also a more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

- More sure than being on the Mountain with Him

The thread through First John

- The Word, The Word, The Word
- What's He called in John 1:1 – The Word

Theme of chapter one “The Flesh and how to Conquer the flesh”

Now verse 3 also introduces a running theme through this chapter and that is

FELLOWSHIP

- a) That's what I love about Spirit filled believers a Church like our should not work because we have the same difficulties as John faced
 - a. We may not have Jews & Greeks, but we have people from backgrounds like
 - i. Baptist
 - ii. Catholic
 - iii. Pentecostal
 - iv. Nothing
 - b) None of us should get along but we do because of the Holy Spirit
 - a. There is some Un-learning to do
 - b. Some learning
 - c. Some hurts to be healed
 - d. Lot of unthinking to do
 - e. How many will admit we had to do some unlearning to do

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING
BUT SO IS FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER

- This is where Agape love develops
- Fall in love with God more and more is where that fellowship increases between us and Him

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We Fellowship Through

- 1) The Word
- 2) Prayer
- 3) Praise & Worship
- 4) Being quite before Him

We also Fellowship with Each other

- a. By coming to Church
 - b. See each other out in public
 - c. No matter how extreme our backgrounds
- 5) Why is fellowship with the Father so important?
- a. Because we cannot have Fellowship with **each other if we don't have fellowship with the Father first.**
 - b. Fellowship with the Father is where we have power to get along with each other
- Talk about extremely different backgrounds! You & God?

We might say “Wow God, that guy is so different than I am, I donno if I can take him/her or not

- God says, “What you and me”?
- I'm always right and You, well....

How can to extremes have fellowship with each other?

Love, Love, Love

How does the Church get along with each other – LOVE –

- You and God always get along
- Love covers a multitude of sins.

1 John 1:3-4 (KJV)

³ That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

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- A. The rest of the chapter we're talking about Fellowship with the Lord
 - a. The First thing that Happens when you are out of fellowship with the Lord, is your joy is gone.
 - i. The relationship is not gone but the joy in the relationship is gone.
 - ii. David said "Restore unto me the JOY of thy salvation"
 - b. Not talking about your position
 - c. You are righteous
 - d. You are saved
 - i. Your nose is bent outta shape and your upset at God.

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