Let God Be True!

First John – An Introduction

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An Introduction to the Epistle of First John

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;)

and when he opened it, all the people stood up: And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God.

And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands:

and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Nehemiah 8:5-6

Introduction

A. Expository preaching of a book of the divine library should cause great anticipation.
   1. You should have extreme respect and reverence as you take it off the sacred shelf.
   2. There should be a combination of eager excitement and trembling fear to read it.
   3. These are the inspired, purified, more sure, and preserved words of the living God.
   4. Your only hope of spiritual assurance, fruitfulness, and growth are by these words.
   5. The detailed description of a preaching service under Nehemiah is the Bible's best.
   6. The spirit of the congregation and the methods of the preachers are very valuable.
   7. The people were incredibly eager, reverent, united to hear sober Bible preaching.
   8. The response to the preaching by both congregation and preachers is also valuable.
   9. For a full explanation of that preaching service and lessons to be learned … A Preaching Service.

B. Expository preaching will take us through every sentence and all words of this epistle.
   1. We identified expository preaching as one the traits of higher ground for a church.
   2. Many love expository preaching, for it uses a specific reference point for learning.
   3. Hearers can better remember what they heard, read ahead, or review the passage.
   4. They see each sentence, verse, phrase, and word for better learning and retention.
   5. It helps us learn the Bible, more than a Bible topic, though both have their place.
   6. It helps keep the speaker closer to scripture, as inspired words drive the preaching.
   7. Topical preaching can lead to proof-texting or interpretational bias of a subject.
   8. Expository preaching will find inspired topical studies by Holy Spirit placement.
   9. We want to know everything God intended for His children in this precious epistle.
   10. We reject superstition about expository preaching, for Jesus and Paul did not use it.
   11. Paul, by his epistles, used a topical method. See his quotations in Rom 3 or Heb 1.

12. The best or only example of expository preaching in the Bible is Ezra (Neh 8:8).

C. John will mainly teach us Jesus' unique sonship, antichrist heresies about Him, value of brotherly love, assurance of eternal life, and practical Christian doctrine about sin.

D. John also teaches full joy, false confidence, maturity levels of Christians, components of worldly lusts, future expectations of believers, exclusion of heretics, unction of the Spirit, potential shame at Christ's coming, high nature and effect of adoption, boldness on Judgment Day, examining false teachers, confidence against Satan, nature of fear and love, two chief attributes of God, grammatical precedence of regeneration to faith or love, three witnesses of Christ in heaven and earth, the sin unto death not to be prayed for, purpose of eternal life, necessity of loving God supremely, etc.

E. Do not dislike or resent doctrinal distinctions and details that are part of this epistle.
   1. It is easy and common for many to have favorite verses and miss John's purposes.
   2. While loving phrases/words, we reject sound bites; we want right sense (Neh 8:8).
   3. If you love Jesus Christ, and think you do so by First John, then accept his method.
   4. If you fear God, trust His wisdom, and appreciate this writer, grasp all his lessons.
   5. God does not accept worship not in truth, especially about His Son (John 4:20-24).
   6. The Father loveth the Son, so you better believe what God has revealed about Him.
   7. Another Jesus by Satan is far more popular than the true one (II Cor 11:1-4,13-15).
   8. Heresies begin with poor definitions of terms or misapplying a Bible text for truth.

F. What attitude should we have taking up a book of the Bible by expository preaching?
   1. God's words are pleasant and profitable beyond comparison (Job 23:12; Psalm 1:2; 19:10-11; 119:72,97,103,105,111,127; Jeremiah 15:16; I Peter 2:2; II Pet 1:19-21).
   2. It is a spiritual book and each word is needed to maximize life (Pr 30:5; Luke 4:4).
   3. It is a life-changing book for those that believe and obey, Paul said (I Thess 2:13).
   4. We have found in the Bible 20+ one-word arguments by our Lord and His apostles, which confirms to us the importance of every word – not one should be neglected.
   5. Can you be excited about one book, one chapter, one verse, or one word at a time?
   6. Hebrews is a precious book – so is chapter one, the first argument, the first word!
   7. John was precious – so is chapter one, the introduction (1:1-18), the first phrase.
   8. Isaiah was filled with phrases and words that we much enjoyed during that series.
   9. We will immerse ourselves in First John even to dulling of others but for reference.
   10. Our thoughts and words should reflect John's words by the Spirit for a few months.
   11. Most cannot synthesize much data at a sitting, so we go a word or phrase at a time.
   12. Slow your reading down for more time to meditate and exalt individual phrases.

G. What benefit should we get from this expositional study? What are our goals from it?
   1. The value of scripture is significant over creation to convert our souls (Ps 19:7-11).
   2. Scripture is given for doctrine, for us to have truth on all matters (II Tim 3:16-17).
   3. Scripture is given for reproof, for God to rebuke or reprove false thinking or ideas.

4. Scripture is given for correction, for us to stop wrong practices that we may follow.
5. Scripture is given for instruction in righteousness, for us to learn and embrace it.

H. Pray for your pastor, as he studies, prepares detailed outlines, preaches many sermons.
1. It is intimidating to conscientious men to rightly divide every phrase of scripture.
2. We depend on God for right understanding of His word (Ps 119:18; Eph 1:17-18).
3. We must rightly divide the scriptures to get its true sense (II Tim 2:15; Neh 8:8).
4. We must grasp all the Holy Spirit intended but not go beyond the Spirit (Pr 30:6).
5. We must make it manifestly clear and simple as we can (II Cor 3:12; 4:2; Col 4:4).
6. We must avoid meats without profit, like esoteric heresies (Hebrews 13:9; Tit 3:9).
7. We must preach it boldly and confidently (Eph 6:19-20; II Cor 10:4-6; Jude 1:3).
8. We must obey what we learn with personal integrity (Luke 8:12-18; Jas 1:21-25).
9. We must follow methods for best learning and retention (I Tim 3:2; II Pet 1:12-15).
10. We must plan sermon complexity and length for lambs and rams (I John 2:12-14).
11. We must see and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ – the Person of all scripture (Jn 5:39).
12. This speaker and writer is less than the least of all saints for starting such a project.
13. God can open a book during preaching by blessing expository emphasis in context.
14. Controversy is the mother of orthodoxy; it requires refining defense of a position.
15. Expository preaching opposes popular proof-texting, sound bites, simple solutions.
16. Expository preaching requires careful study of Spirit intent, context, comparisons.

I. God kindly and greatly blessed us in preaching through Hebrews (1988; 33 sermons), Ecclesiastes (2008; 35 sermons), Romans (2009-2014; 159 sermons), Peter's epistles (2014-2015; 66 sermons), John (2016-2018; 167 sermons), and Isaiah (2019-2020; 75 sermons) among many other shorter expository series and sermons. All glory to God!

J. Labor to learn this epistle thoroughly and retain its lessons in your memory for use.
1. A color-coded copy of the epistle has been made to identify the five main lessons.
2. You could read one chapter a day to read the whole book three times in two weeks.
3. You could memorize one or more favorite verses in each chapter during the series.
4. You could listen to the sermons again during the week from the website postings.
5. You could pray for your pastor to make it very plain and for you to grasp it clearly.
6. Learning from this epistle will vary widely over the church, with the prepared and studious far outstripping the casual and neglectful, but let none be slothful as some.

K. We trust our English Bibles, rather than enter the fruitless field of Greek speculation.
1. Men like Origen lied in Greek well before men like Charles Russell lied in English.
2. These scholars falsely so called will play games with the sense of nouns and verbs.
3. Once you choose to rely on the Greek, you must pick one of many Greek versions.
4. Let us remember the Greeks sought wisdom and never found it. God mocked them.

5. I hate Greek; it steals His words from His people, so they say, *Its all Greek to me!*
6. There is no magic or profit in Greek words, except to confuse and mystify hearers.
7. Some mock Roman Catholic use of Latin and then use Greek for shady meanings.
8. There is more shady superstition in the Greek than profit, substance, for our help.
9. I have never heard or read a verse where light is shed by the Greek not in English.
10. I do know this – internal contradictions like Mark 1:2 in any language prove folly.
11. Their corruption of I John 5:7 is ignorance or malice in all languages and versions.
12. For the four important, internal Bible reasons we use the King James Bible … Proving the King James Version.
13. There is solid confirmation and evidence that the acid test of all Bible versions in any language, I John 5:7, the so-called Johannine Comma, is true … a defense of the Johannine Comma in I John 5:7 (kjvtoday.com), an exegesis of I John 5:7 (jesus-is-savior.com), the book In Defense of the Authenticity of I John 5:7 (amazon.com).

L. Context of any speech or writing is very important, but it has been studied elsewhere.
1. A simple rule for remembering context is *who, whom, why, what, when,* and *where*.
2. The context of Hebrews helped us solve its difficulties, especially *whom* and *when*.
3. The context of Isaiah's chapters were crucial to then interpret the individual verses.
4. For more about context of John's gospels and epistles, see that introduction … John – Introduction.
5. What follows below are the important aspects of John's context for his first epistle.
6. The color-coded version of the epistle helps keep readers with his lesson in mind.
7. This epistle moves back and forth from one lesson to another and then back again.
8. For more about context and its necessity in Bible study and preaching … Slaves to Context, Genitive Case.

WRITER (who)

A. We will remember God is sole Author of scripture with chosen writers (II Peter 1:21).

B. John, a son of Zebedee, one of the original twelve apostles, is the writer of First John.
1. This apostle wrote five of the 27 books making up our New Testament scriptures.
2. He wrote the gospel of John, and this epistle is so similar to prove him here also.
3. Gospel and epistle doctrine, manner, terms are so close to demand the same author.

C. He was in the inner circle of apostles with several special privileges granted by Jesus.
1. Jesus had three close apostles – Peter, James, John – who were privileged by Jesus to attend special events for extra learning (Matthew 17:1; 26:37; Luke 8:51; 22:8).
2. This made John one of the three worthies of the great Son of David (II Sam 23:8).
3. He continued a higher apostolic role than other apostles right into the book of Acts.

D. John was a special favorite of our Lord Jesus, and he was allowed to write about it.
1. He is identified as the disciple Jesus loved – special (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20,24).

2. He is described as leaning on Jesus' bosom at the intimate last supper (John 13:23).
3. We should humbly and fearfully examine ourselves … *would He love us specially?*

E. Some call John the apostle of love, but you better carefully define that title to be right.
1. Jesus named brothers James and John, Boanerges, the sons of thunder (Mark 3:17).
2. This was our Lord's assessment of their character and spirit. An apostle of love?
3. The name Boanerges fits: they asked Jesus to burn up Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56).
4. Limit *apostle of love* title to Jesus Christ loving him and/or teaching brotherly love.
5. Our John was severe against apostates and sinners as reading his writings show.
6. He used *liar* in this epistle five times; Paul only used the term once (Romans 3:4).
7. He jealously tried to stop another's ministry (Luke 9:49-50 cp Numbers 11:24-30).
8. He was bold and confident writing, stating his own truthfulness (Jn 19:35; 21:24).
9. John wrote more of the deity and nature of Jesus as God in the flesh, His identity as prophesied Messiah, and fulfilling prophecies more than the others combined.
10. Of the gospel writers, he was strictest about doctrine (I John 4:1-6; II Jn 1:10; etc.).

F. Tradition suggests John left Judea before 70 A.D. and lived after that in Asia Minor.
1. He would have well known the Lord's warning about fleeing the city of Jerusalem.
2. He was banished to Patmos, a desolate island in the Aegean Sea (Revelation 1:9).
3. He wrote the seven churches of Asia, implying he knew Paul's churches quite well.
4. Tradition claims John survived being thrown in a cauldron of boiling oil in Rome.

G. This epistle was confirmed as apostolic scripture and preserved in God's holy canon.
1. The lofty content of gospel and epistle, from a fisherman, confirms its inspiration.
2. It did not take observers long to know he was unlearned and ignorant (Acts 4:13).
3. Yet, from the first words to final summaries, his writings are sublimely beautiful.
4. They have more mystery of the gospel than history of the gospel (I Timothy 3:16).

H. John was very confident giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to us, as the apostles were.
1. He personally observed crucifixion events to fulfill Bible prophecy (John 19:35).
2. He wrote with confidence of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 21:24-25).
3. He opened his first epistle with a declaration for divine fellowship (I John 1:1-3).

I. He wrote the last book of the Bible to end N.T. scripture (Revelation 1:1; 22:18-21).

AUDIENCE (whom)

A. The audience or expected readers of any work should be important for its full context.
1. Audience is very important for the Sermon on the Mount and the Prodigal Son, etc.
2. The audience of *Hebrews,* Jews in Judea, assist in solving difficulties in that book.

B. There is some Bible internal evidence that John most likely wrote to Gentile readers.
1. We know that he had a strong connection to the seven churches of Asia (Rev 1-3).

2. We know that he was banished to the isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea off Turkey.
3. Why did he define words and customs Jews knew (John 1:38,41; 5:1-2; 4:9; 7:2).
4. Asia Minor had influence of Greek Gnostics and Jewish legalists against believers.

C. At least early, John's apostolic ministry was in Jerusalem and to the Jews (Gal 2:9).

D. But remember, the apostles were told to extend their ministries to the whole world.

E. The lack of any expressed or implied audience leaves it a general epistle good for us.

PURPOSE (why)

A. He states his main purpose in his gospel and his first epistle (John 20:31; I John 5:13).
1. He wrote to believers to build their faith for their greater assurance of eternal life.
2. This is stated clearly in I John 5:13, our epistle committed to personal assurance.
3. Faith, righteousness, and especially love are repeated as strong proof of eternal life.
4. There is likely no better book to identify and define true Christianity for assurance.
5. This is where a person can go that loves Christ and wants to prove his/her election.
6. He identified Jesus to condemn lies of departing seducers (I Jn 2:19; I Cor 11:19).
7. The personal identity of Jesus as Christ, God's Son, and come in the flesh are key.
8. Satan hates his conquering Ruler and has done all he can to deny or distort Him.
9. For a short PowerPoint sermon identifying ancient Christological heresies … this video (Vimeo).
10. He corrected errors of the nature and practice of sin and folly of sinless perfection.
11. While treating our sin in general, John dealt with sin by several profitable angles.
12. This is a book of holiness, yet it is no heretical holiness as heretics claiming no sin.
13. John pressed love in gospel and epistle (by inspiration); he is called apostle of love.
14. He raised the strongest motives to love one another and the greatest promises for it.
15. It is the nature of God; our practice of it proves salvation; it proves Spirit presence.

B. John's gospel cannot contradict the order of regeneration and then faith in his epistle.
1. He could not have written with the opposite order of faith first before regeneration.
2. He could not have written his gospel to oppose and contradict his logical epistle.
3. His gospel also clearly and repeatedly has faith in Christ following a believer's regeneration (John 1:5,12-13; 3:3,6,8; 5:24-29; 6:44-45,6-65; 8:43-47; 14:17).
4. He could not have opposed Paul (Romans 3:9-18; 8:7-8; I Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1-3).
5. His gospel states the same goal and purpose as his epistle (John 20:31; I Jn 5:13).
6. To *have life* is not to get life – it is assurance of possessing it already (John 6:47).
7. Grammar for monergistic regeneration is more in this epistle than any other book.

C. This book aspect of context is important to avoid creating sound bites like Arminians.
1. Knowing John wrote to believers to increase their faith and assurance is valuable.
2. Proof-texting is yanking a verse out of scripture and considering it sufficient alone.

3. Most Arminians know one verse, which they cannot explain or defend (John 3:16).
4. Instead of his books as cotton candy for goats, they are nourishing grain for sheep.
5. John did not write I John for public distribution at malls to get video gamers saved.

D. The book may be reduced to five main themes, though other minor ones are present.
1. Personal identity of Jesus of Nazareth … Son of God, the Christ, come in the flesh.
2. Refutation of lies of antichrist … heretics denying the main facts about our Lord.
3. Brotherly love … command, evidence, nature, and role in salvation and fellowship.
4. Assurance of eternal life … bold confidence and proof by faith, righteousness, love.
5. Christian perspective of sin … the elect cannot continue in it but neither without it.
6. A color-coded copy of the epistle has been made to identify the five main lessons.

E. John certainly wrote his first two epistles against many early heretical, antichrist sects.
1. He needed to confirm Christians in the great mystery of godliness about Jesus as the Christ, as the Son of God, come in the flesh, ascended bodily into heaven, etc.
2. You should compare Paul's refutation of philosophy and lies against the true knowledge of Jesus Christ … fulness of the Godhead in a flesh body (Col 2:8-9).
3. The word of God and gospel were early corrupted (II Corinthians 2:17; Col 2:1-9).
4. Paul warned Corinth about another Jesus and another spirit (II Corinthians 11:3-4).
5. Jesus through John warned the churches of Asia about Nicolaitans (Rev 2:6,15).
6. Only John used the terms *antichrist* and *antichrists* (I John 2:18,22; 4:3; II Jn 1:7).
7. Observe that John said many antichrists had gone out from them (I John 2:18-19).
8. John identified their heresies as against the identity and/or nature of Jesus Christ.
9. It is helpful to know these warning verses (I Jn 2:18-19,22-23; 4:2-3; II Jn 1:7-9).
10. John called him a liar that denied Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, God's Messiah.
11. He was an antichrist that denied or confused the basic Father and Son relationship.
12. Another test of antichrist was even simpler … *Had Jesus Christ come in the flesh?*
13. Without losing focus or wasting valuable time, consider a few of the early heresies.
14. **Cerinthus**. First or second century Gnostic denying deity of Jesus, holding the Christ (Messiah) was separate from Him, followed the Jewish law, etc.
15. **Gnosticism**. Belief the material world is evil, the spiritual world good, and spiritual knowledge or wisdom (gnosis) could be gained for salvation, etc.
16. **Ebionites**. Believed Jesus was Messiah but not divine, required continuation of the Jewish laws and rituals, counted Paul an apostate from the law, etc.
17. **Docetism**. Taught the body of Jesus was only a ghost or phantom, He was too divine to be cumbered with a body, and the Christ came and left Him. From Albert Barnes' introduction to John's epistle, *The opinions of the Docetes are thus represented by Gibbon: "They denied the truth and authenticity of the gospels, as far as they relate the conception of Mary, the birth of Christ, and the thirty years which preceded the first exercise of his ministry. He first appeared on the banks of the*

Jordan in the form of perfect manhood; but it was a form only, and not a substance; a human figure created by the hand of Omnipotence to imitate the faculties and actions of a man, and to impose a perpetual illusion on the senses of his friends and enemies. Articulate sounds vibrated on the ears of his disciples; but the image which was impressed on their optic nerve, eluded the more stubborn evidence of the touch, and they enjoyed the spiritual, but not the corporeal presence of the Son of God. The rage of the Jews was idly wasted against an impassive phantom, and the mystic scenes of the passion and death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, were represented on the theatre of Jerusalem for the benefit of mankind."

18. Brief introductions to the heretics and heresies can be found … Cerinthus (wikipedia.org), Gnosticism (wikipedia.org), the Ebionites (wikipedia.org), Docetism (wikipedia.org).
19. There were many heretics listed by Epiphanius e.g. Cerinthus, Ebion, Simon Magus, the Menandrians, Saturnilians, Basilidians, Nicolaitans, Gnostics, Carpocratians, Cerinthians, Ebionites, and Nazarenes among others. [John Gill].
20. They denied our Lord's deity, person, incarnation, sonship, office in various ways.
21. For a short PowerPoint sermon summarizing basic Christological heresies … this video (Vimeo).

F. Prophesied heresies and danger should be remembered for interpretational confidence.
   1. Jesus our Lord had warned of false Christs in Judea before 70 A.D. (Matt 24:5,24).
   2. Paul's man of sin (popes) was still distant before being revealed (II Thess 2:1-3).
   3. John warned of heretics different and separate from both these other prophecies.
   4. John's *antichrists* were not false Christs, but rather enemies of Jesus the Christ.
   5. John's ministry likely extended beyond 70 A.D. and dealt with Gentiles in Asia.
   6. In Asia, if before 70 A.D., there would be little worry of things coming in Judea.
   7. Paul had warned Ephesus in Asia of heresies arising among them (Acts 20:25-32).
   8. Asia had influence by Greek Gnostics and Jewish legalists against the believers.
   9. Heresies reveal true Christians; nothing new under sun (I Cor 11:19; I John 2:19).

G. John's gospel and his first two epistles are very clear and strict against Christ-heresies.
   1. The test of those antichrists was always this … *Had Jesus Christ come in the flesh?*
   2. Never neglect the necessity and value of John and Paul's testimonies to the fact God came in human flesh to this world in Jesus (Jn 1:1,14; Col 2:8-9; I Tim 3:16).
   3. Despise changes like modern Greek and English versions diluting Paul's mystery of godliness opening (I Tim 3:16) – changing *God* to *Who* or *He* or *Jesus*
   4. John's several tests of orthodoxy raise four critical issues about Jesus the Christ.
   5. First critical issue … *Is Jesus of Nazareth the Christ, the Messiah of God?*
   6. Second critical issue … *Is Jesus Christ the Son of God? And by what means?*
   7. Third critical issue … *Did Jesus Christ have a real, material human body?*
   8. Fourth critical issue … *Is Jesus God (an issue not as obvious as the others)?*
   9. At stake is being God's and knowing the Father (I John 2:22-23; II John 1:7-11).

10. Controversy is the mother of orthodoxy, making men be more precise in doctrine.

H. Thus, consider how in this his first epistle that John declared all four critical issues.
   1. He started with Jesus as eternal God (the beginning), the Word of life (I John 1:1).
   2. He described the Word of life as the eternal life (God) with the Father (I John 1:2).
   3. He then described this Word manifest to the apostles as God's Son (I John 1:2-3).
   4. He and others had heard, seen, looked on, and handled the eternal God (I Jn 1:1-3).
   5. This eternal Word of God was manifest as Jesus the Christ, Son of God (I Jn 1:3).
   6. This manifest divine being was Jesus Christ the Son of God with a real flesh body.
   7. There is no confusion on any aspect of identity of Jesus the Son of the eternal God.
   8. Jesus of Nazareth is Messiah Christ, the Son of God, the fulness of God in a body.
   9. John declared Jesus fully alive and available for fellowship years after ascending.
   10. Fellowship with God and His Son was for the apostles and for ordinary Christians.
   11. This fellowship, or intimate friendship with God, is by the Spirit (John will tell us).
   12. We cannot compromise any aspect of Him; let us love Him supremely all our lives.
   13. All apostolic fellowship starts and ends with the right identity of Jesus God's Son.
   14. John wrote based on the above for Christians to easily be full of joy by fellowship.

I. Consider how John's gospel account also affirmed all four of the same critical issues.
   1. He began with the Word as God and with God, the maker of all things (Jn 1:1-3).
   2. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among them as the Son of God (John 1:14).
   3. John the Baptist, six months older, said Jesus was actually before Him (John 1:15).
   4. The eternally invisible God had by this flesh Son revealed Himself (John 1:18).
   5. He recorded Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael saying Jesus is Christ (John 1:40-51).
   6. He wrote our Lord's strong testimony that before Abraham was, *I am* (John 8:58).
   7. He documented Thomas able to touch a real body after resurrection (Jn 14:27-28).
   8. Why did John write his gospel? Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31)!

J. John also had a second test to prove spirits and prophets regarding truth (I John 4:1-6).
   1. The apostles, John included, were sent by God to declare inspired truth (I Jn 4:6).
   2. The difference between truth and error is humble submission to apostolic doctrine.
   3. If the apostles did not teach it or do it, we will not allow it to be taught or done.
   4. This strong, dogmatic opinion of their gospel was very much like Paul (Gal 1:6-9).
   5. We are traditionalists – we hold to the traditions of Christ's apostles (II Thess 3:6).
   6. Jesus through John praised Ephesus (John's church) for disproving apostles, the church that Paul had plainly warned about such heretics arising (Acts 20:28-32).
   7. Let us commit ourselves fully to the word of God's grace and never move from it.
   8. We must earnestly content for the apostolic faith against false teachers (Jude 1:3).

METHOD (what)

A. The gospel of John is a fabulous book of the Bible, rightly exalted in its place … John – Introduction.

B. This apostle wrote things the other gospel writers did not include in their accounts.
   1. A short reversion to the gospel of John will help you appreciate John's epistle here
   2. John did not record anything of our Lord's birth to Joseph and Mary or early years.
   3. John started with His eternal existence as God in the beginning before all creation.
   4. He did not present Jesus' birth in this world as the Son of Abraham or David or Adam, as Matthew and Luke; John traced Jesus back in His divine nature to God.
   5. John emphasized more than the other gospel writers of the divine character and nature of Jesus, or His deity (John 1:1-2,14,18; 5:23; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; 17:5,21).
   6. His gospel has six whole chapters of the last hours before Jesus was killed (12-17).
   7. His gospel has more about Christ – person, design, work – than the other gospels.
   8. The other gospels record more of Jesus' activities, miracles, and external events.
   9. Rather than emphasize the *history* of Christ, John showed to readers the *mystery*.
   10. Above and beyond the *logic* of Paul, John is *lofty* in spiritual truth about our Lord.
   11. John fully revealed the Messiah as God incarnate, His mission, and in His words.
   12. John recorded His doctrine far more – wisely consider chapters 1,3,5,6,8,10,13-17.
   13. He wrote more than the others about Jesus Christ after His resurrection, the great need and evidence of our faith in Him, the necessity of regeneration, the doctrine of our union with Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit and His purpose, etc., etc.
   14. His epistle before us is like his gospel, but shorter to be far more dense in doctrine.

C. John's gospel has many more references to faith and eternal life than the other three.
   1. The other gospels have no mention of being born again or of passing into new life.
   2. They use *eternal* or *everlasting life* six times, four by questions, but John 13 times.
   3. They use *believe* 23 times, rarely for eternal life, but John 46 times for eternal life.
   4. His epistle has the same emphasis for adoption, being born again, and proof of it.

D. John used the word *world* far more than other writers in the New Testament scripture.
   1. This beloved apostle used the word *world* 59 times in just his gospel account alone.
   2. If we add the 18 times John used *world* in his epistles (17 here), we have 77 uses.
   3. The other three writers only used the word *world* 32 times, and often differently.

E. We will define the 17 uses of *world* in this epistle to rightly assign its true sense.John's epistle in some respects, but not all, is a short, concise summary of his gospel.
   1. Without distraction of the Jews and events woven in, his first epistle is pure matter.
   2. It is pure, mature, apostolic doctrine for second-generation Christians in the world.
   3. There are no references to persons or events that cannot be directly applied to us.
   4. Learning and applying its lessons to your life will help you maximize faith and life.

LOCATION (where)

A. A little helpful at other times, like Peter in Babylon or Paul in prison, it is not so here.

B. John likely wrote this epistle from Ephesus or Asia, possibly before exile to Patmos.

CORRUPTIONS

A. There are many corruptions in the text, which computer analysis or study can reveal.
   1. The following perversions are changes in both Greek and English modern versions.
   2. Check the introduction to the exposition of the gospel for many more corruptions.
   3. I John 1:4 … most modern versions change *your joy* to *our joy,* stealing our joy.
   4. I John 1:7 … all modern versions omit *Christ,* diluting identity of Jesus God's Son.
   5. I John 2:20 … most modern versions change *ye know all things* to *ye all know*.
   6. I John 2:28 … most modern versions change *when* to *if,* questioning His coming.
   7. I John 3:5 … most modern versions omit *our,* stealing our personal confidence.
   8. I John 3:16 … all modern versions omit *of God,* raising questions of whose love.
   9. I John 4:3 … most modern versions omit *Christ is come in the flesh,* ruining a test.
   10. I John 5:7 … is gone in all modern versions, Greek or English, denying the Trinity and God's glorious heavenly witness of Jesus His Son. This is the Bible acid test.
   11. I John 5:13 … all omit *and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God.*
   12. There is solid confirmation and evidence that the acid test of all Bible versions in any language, I John 5:7, the so-called Johannine Comma, is true … a defense of the Johannine Comma in I John 5:7 (kjvtoday.com), an exegesis of I John 5:7 (jesus-is-savior.com), the book In Defense of the Authenticity of I John 5:7 (amazon.com).

B. There are many corruptions in interpretation, which experience brings a few to mind.
   1. I John 1:5 … the opening fact that God is *light* (holy) is either ignored or slighted.
   2. I John 2:2 … is used to teach a general ransom of Jesus dying for every single man.
   3. I John 2:18 … the foolish presumption that antichrist is a future cyclops of the U.N.
   4. I John 2:27 … any weekend warrior can arrive at truth easier than a studious pastor.
   5. I John 3:6 … is used to teach the possibility or necessity of your sinless perfection.
   6. I John 4:1 … is used to teach exorcism or Hinn magic rather than test by scripture.
   7. I John 4:8 … is used to teach God is only or primarily love, ignoring 1:5 earlier.
   8. I John 4:13 … the foolish notion that tongues or other phenomena show eternal life.
   9. I John 4:14 … another use of *world* by John corrupted to mean a general ransom.
   10. I John 4:15 … ignorance of verb tenses to teach confessing Jesus to get born again.
   11. I John 5:6 … the *water and blood* applied to Jesus' rent side by the soldier's spear.
   12. I John 5:12 … used to teach you must invite Jesus into your heart to have the Son.
   13. I John 5:13 … used to teach that belief is a necessary priority to get eternal life.

14. I John 5:16 … total ignorance of what the sin unto death is and why not to pray.
15. I John 5:19 … hypocritical bias to apply uses of *world* to all men except here.
16. I John 5:20 … Jesus came to offer eternal life to those He wooed to accept Him.

JEWELS & FAVORITES

A. There are only 105 verses in this manageable book for you to learn its inspired words.
B. This is far less than the 1,292 verses in Isaiah and the 879 verses in the gospel of John.
C. Joyfully consider some favorite jewel phrases of this book that the saints have loved.
    1. I John 1:1 … *Word of life.*
    2. I John 1:1 … *our hands have handled.*
    3. I John 1:3 … *that ye also may have fellowship with us.*
    4. I John 1:4 … *that your joy may be full.*
    5. I John 1:5 … *God is light.*
    6. I John 1:7 … *walk in the light*.
    7. I John 1:9 … *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins*.
    8. I John 2:1 … *And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father*.
    9. I John 2:1 … *Jesus Christ the righteous*.
    10. I John 2:2 … *And he is the propitiation for ous sins*.
    11. I John 2:5 … *in him verily is the love of God perfected*.
    12. I John 2:8 … *because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth*.
    13. I John 2:12 … *I write unto you, little children … fathers … young men.*
    14. I John 2:14 … *because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you.*
    15. I John 2:15 … *Love not the world*.
    16. I John 2:16 … *For all that is in the world*.
    17. I John 2:17 … *he that doeth the will of God abideth forever*.
    18. I John 2:20 … *ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things*.
    19. I John 2:28 … *we may have confidence, not be ashamed before him at his coming*.
    20. I John 3:1 … *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us*.
    21. I John 3:13 … *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you*.
    22. I John 3:16 … *Hereby perceive we the love of God*.
    23. I John 3:20 … *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart*.
    24. I John 4:1 … *believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God*.
    25. I John 4:4 … *because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*.
    26. I John 4:6 … *Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error*.
    27. I John 4:7 … *every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God*.
    28. I John 4:8 … *God is love (also 4:16).*

29. I John 4:10 … *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us*.
30. I John 4:12 … *No man hath seen God at any time*.
31. I John 4:17 … *that we may have boldness in the day of judgment*.
32. I John 4:18 … *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear*.
33. I John 4:19 … *We love him, because he first loved us*.
34. I John 5:3 … *his commandments are not grievous*.
35. I John 5:4 … *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world*.
36. I John 5:6 … *This is he that came by water and blood*.
37. I John 5:14 … *if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us*.
38. I John 5:16 … *he shall ask … he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death*.
39. I John 5:16 … *There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*
40. I John 5:20 … *the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding*.

D. Joyfully consider some favorite jewel <u>words</u> of this book that the saints have loved.
1. I John 1:1 … *That.*
2. I John 1:1 … *Beginning*.
3. I John 1:1 … *Word.*
4. I John 1:2 … *Manifested*.
5. I John 1:3 … *Fellowship (also 1:6-7).*
6. I John 1:6 … *Walk (also 1:7 and 2:6).*
7. I John 1:9 … *Faithful.*
8. I John 1:9 … *Forgive.*
9. I John 1:9 … *Cleanse.*
10. I John 2:1 … *Advocate.*
11. I John 2:2 … *Propitiation (2/3 N.T. uses; 4:10 also).*
12. I John 2:5 … *Perfected (also 4:12).*
13. I John 2:8 … *Light (also 2:9-11).*
14. I John 2:10 … *Stumbling.*
15. I John 2:18 … *Antichrist.*
16. I John 2:20 … *Unction.*
17. I John 3:9 … *Seed.*
18. I John 3:21 … *Confidence.*
19. I John 3:22 … *Pleasing.*
20. I John 3:24 … *Dwelleth.*
21. I John 3:24 … *Abideth.*
22. I John 4:4 … *Overcome (also 2:13-14).*

23. I John 4:4 … *Greater.*
24. I John 4:7 … *Love.*
25. I John 4:17 … *Boldness*.
26. I John 5:4 … *Overcometh (5:5 also).*
27. I John 5:6 … *Witness (5:8-10 also).*
28. I John 5:7 … *Record.*
29. I John 5:18 … *Toucheth.*
30. I John 5:20 … *Understanding.*

SUGGESTIONS

A. If you wish I went faster, be patient, consider others, or review to thoroughly grasp it.
B. If you wish I went slower, read ahead and review/study behind for greater grasp of it.
C. The more familiar you are with the book, the greater your benefit and joy by the study.
D. If you read just one chapter a day, you would read it three times every two weeks.
E. You could pick favorite phrases or words, and you could memorize favorite verses.
F. As Paul told Ephesus, pray for the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph 1:17).
G. Choose one or two, Samuel or Cornelius for desire for truth (I Sam 3:9; Acts 10:33).
H. Paul needed prayer; your pastor needs it more for mutual benefit (Ep 6:19; Ps 119:18).
I. This epistle has precious doctrinal and practical information for perfection in Christ.
J. It is concise with great content, so you can eagerly anticipate and receive each sermon.

PROCEDURE

A. We must steer wisely between going too slow that bores and too fast and miss jewels.
B. John's gospel had 21 chapters and 879 verses, and we had 169 sermons, 8 per chapter.
C. First John has 105 verses (1/8 of the gospel), so we should aim for around 20 sermons.
D. The Holy Spirit condensed this first epistle tightly, so we will try to match inspiration.
E. Use the color-coded version of the epistle that has been distributed, it will truly help.
F. Holding five main lessons in view has John moving back and forth and limits context.
G. Seek each verse's role in the context of the main lesson and with surrounding verses.
H. We will try not to use many cross-references to focus on learning this epistle's verses.