



First John - 5 chapters

Title:

The First Epistle of John – because it is the First of three epistles written by John

Author:

The author of this epistle was John, one of Jesus's original twelve disciples. He was the one called "the disciple whom Jesus loved" in the fourth Gospel. This same John is the author of the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation, as well as the three epistles of John. At the time of writing this letter, he was fairly old, and still overseeing a number of churches in Asia minor.

Occasion and Purpose:

The occasion of this book was false teachers which had been active in the churches. Not only were they teaching falsehood and denying Christ, but they were also displaying an arrogant attitude and insulting those who did not go along with them as lesser Christians. The false teachers left the church, causing factions, damage, and leaving behind believers doubting their faith. And so, John's purpose was to encourage these true believers: that they were right to reject the false teachers, that they should continue not to give in to their deception, and that they could be secure in the knowledge that their faith was genuine. And so, John not only encouraged them to faith and faithful living, but he also gave them tests so that they could know they truly had eternal life.

Themes:

The themes of 1 John are all contrasts which John made between the true way & false.

1. **Christ vs. Antichrist** – Antichrist is all that works against Christ, often by claiming to be the true way. The false teachers were against Christ, and their teaching and lifestyle were opposite to His. Therefore, John's readers were to reject them, and follow Christ.
2. **Light vs. Darkness** – God and everything related to Him is characterized by light. And everything opposed to God is characterized by darkness, sin and unrighteousness. Darkness is deceptive, hiding shameful things, but light is characterized by righteousness and love. Light is also characterized by transparency, repentance and forgiveness, when sin does occur.
3. **Love vs. Hate** – Christians are to love good things, but also hate bad things, which God hates. But in this letter, John mostly stressed that Christians are to be characterized by love for one another. We are to love God, and our love for God spills over into love for one another. The quality of our love, and the object of our love is a good test whether we have eternal life.
4. **Righteousness vs. Sin** – Righteousness is everything that is in conformity with God, and sin is all that is opposed to his character and commands. Righteousness draws a person closer to God and sin pushes them away. And so, righteousness is a test for eternal life. Those who have life are drawn closer to God and are conformed to His character, no longer being consumed by sin as the defining part of who they are.
5. **Truth vs. Falsehood** – Jesus is the truth, and the false teachers and their teaching are false. Those who follow Christ are filled with the truth and are walking in the truth. Those who sin and/or deny that they have sinned are walking in falsehood, and lie to themselves.
6. **Confess vs. Deny** – Christians must confess certain things which are true, and deny other things, which are untrue. And so, our convictions and loyalties are seen publicly. We hold these convictions in our heart. But we also live out the implications in all of our lives.

Summary:

John wrote to encourage true believers who had been damaged by arrogant false teachers. He encouraged his readers to remain faithful to Christ and His truth, and to live a faithful lifestyle. And he gave three tests so that his readers could know they had eternal life: the doctrine test – that they held faithful to the truth about Christ, the love test – that they genuinely loved one another, in actions as well as words, and the righteousness test – that they lived in a godly manner that was faithful to the purity of Christ, rejecting and repenting from sin. These test could help them to confirm that they were conforming to the God Who is Light, and rejecting all darkness from the false teachers.

Organization:

1:1-4 Prologue	
1:5-2:2 Light and Darkness	
2:3-3:24 True & False Believers	
	2:3-6 Tests for Knowing God
	2:7-11 Old & New Commandments to not be in the Darkness
	2:12-14 Encouragements with Affection
	2:15-17 Do not Love the World
	2:18-25 Tests for Truth
	2:26-27 Stand in the Truth
	2:28-29 Promise of His Revelation
	3:1-3 Our Identity in Christ
	3:4-10 The Seriousness of Sin
	3:11-18 Love One Another
	3:19-24 Tests if we are In Him and He in us
4:1-5:12 True & False Faith	
	4:1-6 Test the Spirits
	4:7-12 Love One Another
	4:13-15 Two Tests
	4:16-21 The Love of God
	5:1-5 Faith and Love
	5:6-12 The Testimony
5:13-21 Conclusion	

Key Verses:

1:1-4, 1:5-2:2, 2:15-17, 2:21-26, 3:1-3, 3:7-10, 4:1-6, 4:7-12, 5:10-13, 5:21