



BIBLE CLASS

WITH DR. SAMUEL U. BULGIN

The Epistles of John

the love, life, and light of God

Saturdays  3pm - 4pm

ATL | Belvedere

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN / INTRODUCTION

In this Epistle, John focuses on God and what it means for us. John employs three metaphors to reveal God to his readers: light, love, and life. John enjoys fellowship with the God who is light, love, and life, and he wants his readers to enjoy the same fellowship.

God is light. Fellowship with Him means we walk in light and not darkness. Walking in light means confession of sins, being cleansed from sin on an ongoing basis by the blood of Christ, and recognizing the two obstacles to this walk: falling in love with the world and falling for the alluring lies of false teachers.

God is love. As children, we must walk in love. To not walk in love is to be ignorant of who God is. Love is more than words; it is action, love is giving, not getting. Love is unconditional in its essence. True love frees us from condemnation and gives us confidence in the presence of God.

God is life. Fellowship with God gives us this life. It comes as a result of spiritual birth (John 1:12, 13). We become possessors of God's life-eternal life.

AUTHORSHIP

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST JOHN

The Epistle does not explicitly identify the author. However, the similarity of the language to that of the Fourth Gospel leads us to think that John is the author.

THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST JOHN

The Book was written to deal with the seductive nature of antinomian Gnosticism as it threatened the church at large. It could be said that the Books were written to deal with current difficulty and danger.

1. Righteousness was down-played and intellectualism was highlighted.
2. The Scripture's authority was muted and human knowledge exalted.
3. Christ's work was made of no account because there was no real sin or evil.

OUTLINE

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST JOHN

INTRODUCTION – Subject Matter and Purpose (1:1-4)

God is Light (1:5-2:28)

- A. Walking in the light involves:
 - a. Fellowship with God and with the brethren. (1:5-7)
 - b. Consciousness and confession of sin. (1:8-10)
 - c. Obedience by imitation of Christ (2:1-6)

- B. Walking in the light does not involve (2:7-28):
 - a. Hatred of the brethren. (2:7-11)
 - b. The world and its ways. (2:12-17)
 - c. Antichrists. (2:18-28)

God is Love (3:1-5:12)

- A. The evidence of sonship is righteousness.
 - a. The children of God and the children of the devil. (3:1-12)
 - b. Love and hate; life and death. (3:13-24)

- B. The source of sonship is the possession of the Spirit.
 - a. The Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (4:1-6)
 - b. Love and faith. (4:7-5:12)

God is Life (5:13; 4:13-15; 1:1-4)

- A. Belief in the Son of God let us know we have eternal life. (5:13)

- B. God lives in us and we in Him. He gives us the Spirit. (4:13-15)

- C. God is the Word of Life. The Life appeared and is seen, testified to, and proclaimed.
 - a. Jesus is the Eternal Life and we can have fellowship with Him, and with the Father. (1:1-4)

CONCLUSION

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST JOHN

1. The certainty of eternal life. (5:13)
2. Confidence and compassion in prayer. (5:14-17)
3. Knowing the true and rejecting the false. (5:18-21)

We can make the following declaration having studied the First Epistle of John:

- Jesus, the Son of God, came to destroy the works of the devil (3:8) and make us children of God (3:1) and heirs of eternal life (5:20).
- We can purify ourselves as He is pure (3:3) so that when He appears (3:2), with power and great glory, we will be like Him (3:2).

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN / INTRODUCTION

It is addressed to a chosen lady and her children, who are walking in the truth and, remaining faithful to the commandments they received from the Father. He knows that it is important to remind her and her children to love one another (v. 5), which is tantamount to walking in harmony with God's commandments.

This love is not naïve, but discerning; it is a choice. False teachers deny that Jesus came in the flesh and they should not fellowship with them. Instead we must have fellowship with God and fellow Christians.

OUTLINE

THE EPISTLE OF SECOND JOHN

INTRODUCTION (1-4)

Exhortation (5-11)

1. To love and obedience (5, 6)
2. Against false doctrine (7-9)
3. Against false charity (10, 11)

Farewell Greeting (12-13)

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN / **INTRODUCTION**

It encourages fellowship with fellow Christians and assures Gaius of John's prayers for his health. John is joyful for Gaius' persistent walk in the truth and the way he shows hospitality and support for missionaries.

He is aware that not everyone in the Church is living according to the truth. Diotrephes is not living in love. Pride has taken over his life. He refuses John's letter and accused John of evil words and refuses to accept missionaries. Diotrephes thinks his authority in the church will be superseded by John.

John forbids others to do what Diotrephes is doing. He encourages Gaius to continue his hospitality and observes that Demetrius has a good testimony, character, and is loyal to the truth.



OUTLINE

THE EPISTLE OF THIRD JOHN

INTRODUCTION (1-4)

Exhortation (5-12)

1. The Hospitality of Gaius (5-8)
2. The arrogance of Diotrephes (9,10)
3. The moral (11, 12)

Farewell Greeting (13, 14)

1. He has many things to write.
2. He will not write them.
3. He hopes to see him shortly.
4. He will speak face-to-face.

