



The Epistle of Love ***“Love and Obey”*** **The Epistle of First John**

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The Apostle John wrote these three epistles in the latter years of his life, warning the churches of the false doctrines that had infiltrated their fellowships.

- Ephesus was located in the intellectual center of Asia minor, and hyper-intellectualism was perverting the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith.
- “Gnosticism” was the most dangerous heresy that threatened the early church for the first 300 years. The “Gnostics” believed physical matter was inherently bad, and spiritual matter was inherently good. Therefore, they denied the humanity of Jesus to preserve Him from evil, and elevated the knowledge of man over the divinely inspired and infallible Word of God.
- Another heresy declared that the Spirit of Christ descended upon Jesus at His baptism, and left Him just before His crucifixion. In effect, nullifying His death as the sufficient atonement for our sins.

So, John wrote this letter:

- To expose the false teachers who had crept into the church and introduced their heresies – 1 John 2:26 – ***“These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you!”***
- To give the believers the assurance of their eternal salvation – 1 John 5:13 – ***“These things have I written unto you that believe on***

the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God!"

- John said, "I was there! Jesus was my cousin, in the flesh. He had a physical body. We touched Him! We handled Him! I walked beside that body for three years. I saw that body hanging from the cross. I saw that body being placed in the grave, and I saw that resurrected body alive; walking and talking again. And I saw that body as it ascended back into the heavens."
- 1 John 1:3 – 4: ***"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. And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full!"***

1. The Christian's Relationship with God the Father and God the Son – 1 John 1:5-2:29

Seven Standards to test a Christian's Relationship with God the Father and God the Son:

- **The Ethical test** – 1 John 1:5-7 – *If a person says they are right with God but continue to walk in sin, they are deceived.*
- **The Obedience test** – 1 John 2:3-6 – *If a person says they are right with God but do not obey His commandments, they are liars.*
- **The Love of Fellow Believers test** – 1 John 2:7-11 – *If a person says they are right with God but do not love other believers, they are blind.*
- **The Spiritual Growth test** – 1 John 2:12-14 – *If a person says they are right with God but are not growing spiritually, they are deceived.*
- **The Love of the World test** – 1 John 2:15-17 – *If a person says they are right with God but still love the world, the love of the Father is not in them.*
- **Recognizing the Antichrist test** – 1 John 2:18-23 – *If a person says they are right with God but are not prepared to face the Antichrists, they will be taken captive to his lies.*
- **Abiding in the Word test** – 1 John 2:24-29 – *If a person says they are right with God but do not abide in His Word, and therefore allow Christ to abide in them, they will be ashamed.*

2. The Christian's Love of God the Father and God the Son – 1 John 3:1-4:21

Six Standards to test a Christian's love for God:

- **The test of experience** – 1 John 3:1-3 – *the love of God is shed abroad in the Christian's heart.*
- **The test of turning from sin** – 1 John 3:4-9 – *the sins we once loved become despicable and detestable to us.*
- **The test of being marked by love** – 1 John 3:10-17 – *we either manifest the love of God or the hate of the devil toward others.*
- **The test of having a clean heart** – 1 John 3:18-24 – *if our heart condemns us, even though we have confessed all known sin, then God is greater than our heart. But if our heart condemns us not, that is the evidence of our confidence before Him.*
- **The test of false teachers** – 1 John 4:1-6 – *are we able to identify, mark and avoid false teachers.*
- **The test of loving one another** – 1 John 4:7-21 – *if God so loved us, then we ought to love one another in the same way.*

3. The Christian's Faith in God the Father and God the Son – 1 John 5:1-21

Three Standards to test a Christian's faith in God:

- **The test of being born again** – 1 John 5:1-5 – *John lists three evidences of genuine faith:*
 - *Belief in the Person and work of Jesus Christ*
 - *Obedience to God's commandments*
 - *Able to live in the world but not become part of it.*

- **The test of believing Jesus is the Son of God** – 1 John 5:6-15 – *John lists four witnesses to validate that Jesus Christ was Who He claimed to be – the Messiah – the Savior sent from God to redeem lost man from his sins.*
 - *The mission of Jesus – was He truly born of a virgin and did He truly die upon the cross?*
 - *The witness of the Holy Spirit – have men's lives been radically changed by their faith in Jesus Christ?*
 - *The witness of the Triune Godhead:*
 - *God the Father who devised the plan*
 - *God the Word (Son) who revealed the plan*
 - *God the Holy Spirit who carried out the plan*
- **The test of living a life free of sin** – 1 John 5:16-21 – *are we living our lives in sinful pleasure, or giving our lives to our Lord and Savior?*

**“These things have I written unto you that believe
on the name of the Son of God;
that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life!”
1 John 5:13**