

# Introducing I John

## Introduction

Today people hold that truth is relative. We become tolerant of sins and false teaching. Church is under attack for being unloving when we take a firm stance in truth, and through these attacks, people compromise the truth. However, when John wrote the letter of I John, he wrote in a time where false doctrine was spreading and causing confusion to people. John's letter is really a letter of the time...letter for today.

## I. Portrait of John

- John's contribution to the NT
  - No sermons recorded
  - Only one statement he made (**Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49**)
  - Last few years of his life—wrote the Gospel, 3 letters, and Revelation
    - He was the last Apostle
    - Responsibility to preach, evangelize, proclaim the truth, overseer to the churches.
- John the disciple
  - Younger son of Zebedee (James was older)
  - Fisherman (**Mark 1:20**)
  - Follower of John the Baptist (**John 1:35-40**)
  - Apostle (**Matthew 10:2**)
  - Inner circle of the Twelve (**Matthew 17:1**)
- Characteristics of John
  - Son of Thunder (**Mark 3:17**)
    - Seat of prominence (**Mark 10:35-37; Matthew 20:20-22**)
    - Burn up the Samaritan village (**Luke 9:54**)
    - Prevent others from casting out demons (**Luke 9:49; Mark 9:38**)
    - Narrow, dogmatic, self-promoting ambition
  - Apostle of Love
    - Humility—shown throughout the Gospel of John and the letters (Jesus wants his resolution, his commitment to the truth)
    - Love one another
    - Lover of truth—intolerant devotion of truth—everything was black and white (he never tolerated deception and lies...telling the truth is the most loving thing anyone can do)
    - Known for opposites (light/darkness, confess sins/deny sins, obedient/disobedient, love others/don't love others, love God/don't love God, righteous/sinful, keep the commandments/don't keep commandments, believe/disbelieve)

## II. Combating Heresy

- Reasons behind the letter
  - **I John 2:18**—false teachers have come
    - **Acts 20:29-31**
    - **II Timothy 3:1-5**
    - John probably wrote the letter to the churches around Ephesus
  - False teachings in letter
    - **4:2-3**—deny incarnation
    - **2:22**—deny that Jesus is the Christ

- **1:6**—claim to know God but lived in sinful lifestyle
- Gnosticism
  - Man's body (flesh) = evil
  - Salvation escape from body (special knowledge "*gnosis*")
  - Christ's true humanity denied
    - Christ did not have bodily form (only seemed to have body)
    - Divine Christ spirit joined Jesus at baptism and left before the body died
  - Flourished in 2<sup>nd</sup> century through the 4<sup>th</sup> century

### III. John the Pastor

- Church shaken and insecure on who is right
  - **4:4**—the church had overcome the false teaching
  - **2:19**—many have left the church and trying to draw them away
- John's pastoral purpose for the letter to the churches
  - Our joy be full (**1:4**)
  - Our life abound in holiness (**2:1**)
  - Our heart and mind be assured (**5:13**)
- Tests of assurances
  - Moral tests—issues with sin
  - Fellowship tests—loving one another and God
  - Doctrinal tests

### Conclusion

John wrote that we would have confidence in His name—the same confidence the writer of Hebrews say in 4:16: Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.