

1 John

True Love & Fellowship

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Recipients and Purpose

- While the recipients are not specified, it appears to be a “general letter” intended for wide circulation
- Purpose: “What we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; but truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that our joy may be complete” (1:3-4)
- Purpose (in other words): “My little children, I write these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone should sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (2:1)

Brief Outline of 1 John

- God is light (1:5—2:28)
 - Since God is light, believers should walk in the light as God is in the light (1:7)
- God is righteous (2:29—4:6)
 - Since God is righteous, we should practice all that is right (cf. Mt. 3:15; the opposite: Acts 13:10)
- God is love (4:7—5:12)
 - Since God is love, we should imitate and demonstrate God's love to one another

Who Is the Antichrist?

- In the NT, only John uses antichrist(s):
 - “an opposer of Christ” (Mounce)
 - 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7
 - If John intends the recipients to understand the singular “antichrist” as an individual or a position, perhaps a parallel would be “the man of sin/lawlessness” (2 Thess. 2:3-12)
 - Some believe it refers to a Roman emperor (or position) or the papacy (the office of the pope)

They Went Out From Us But They Were Not Of Us

1 Jn. 2:19

- “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us” (NKJV)
- “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us” (NASB)

They Went Out From Us But They Were Not Of Us

1 Jn. 2:19

- “They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us” (NIV)
- “They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us” (NRSV)

- “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us” (ASV)
- Burton Coffman says, “From this verse it is plain that the 'antichrists' were Christians who had defected from the truth. . . . Such a verse as this, of course, is made use of as a crutch for the proposition that a person 'once saved is always saved'; however, it should be carefully noted that John did not here write of the false teachers that 'they never had been of us,' but that at an unspecified previous time, they were not”
(*Commentary on 1 John*, 384-385)

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- Coffman continues, “This is even more clear in the last clause where the word is not that they had never been of us, but that they are not of us. Their departure from the faith became final at some point prior to their leaving; but there is no suggestion by the apostle that those who departed had never been truly converted at the beginning of their Christian association. The fallen angels were not wicked from the beginning but became so; and Judas was not wicked when the Lord chose him as an apostle, but he fell 'through transgression'” (385)

- Guy N. Woods states, “The antecedent of 'they' is the word 'anti-christ,' of the preceding verse. The preposition *ek*, rendered 'out from,' indicates origin from the center; and these were, therefore formerly among the disciples, and members of the church. They became apostates from the fold by going out. They were not 'of' the disciples, i.e., they did not possess the same spirit of obedience characteristic of the disciples, for if they had 'they would have continued with' the disciples. In going out, i.e., in apostatizing from the faith, they were 'made manifest' (shown to be), not of the disciples, and for the reason assigned above” (*A Commentary on the First Epistle of John*, 244)

- Woods continues, “This passage often cited by advocates of the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy for the purpose of showing that those who abandon the cause are mere professors or pretenders . . . falls far short of the effort; for
 - (a) they were once with the disciples;
 - (b) they went out from them;
 - (c) one does not go out from a place where he has never been;
 - (d) had they possessed the same love for the Lord and equal desire to serve him as those from whom they went out, they would have continued with them;
 - (e) they did, in fact continue for a time, and then ceased to be faithful.
 - (f) It follows, therefore, that they simply apostatized from the right way” (244)

- Curtis Cates says, “Errorists who hold to the ‘once saved, always saved,’ impossibility of apostasy heresy hold the position that the child of God cannot so sin as to be finally lost. They use this verse incorrectly to teach that if a person is clearly shown to be a false teacher or a rebellious sinner, he was never a child of God. . . . This false doctrine has also spawned such heretical teachings as voting for membership, giving one’s personal ‘testimony,’ or ‘witness,’ of some ‘better-felt-than-told’ experience, and such like. However, the teaching of once-a-Christian-necessarily-always-a-Christian is not in congruency with Bible doctrine. . . . Those in fellowship with God can abandon that fellowship (1 John 1.1-4 . . .) [*Studies in 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John*, Editor: Dub McClish, 1987 Annual Denton Lectures, 77]

- Cates continues, “Children of God can ‘renounce God in their hearts,’ as Job knew and acknowledged that his sons (also children of God) might have done; for this reason, Job offered sacrifices for them (Job 1.5). These anti-christs had reached the place of renouncing God and His Son in their hearts; thus, they departed from the fellowship of the saved” (Curtis Cates, 77)

They Went Out From Us But They Were Not Of Us

1 Jn. 2:19

- Rigid translation: “Out of us they went out, but they were not out of us; for if they were out of us, they would have continued anyhow with us; but that they might be revealed that they all are not out of us”
 - “Out of us they went out”: ἐξ (a form of ἐκ; “out of”) and ἐξηλθον (“they went out”) to clarify that a group who had been “doing the will of God” (2:17) “arose” (2:18) in opposition to Christ (“antichrists,” 2:18) and exited (2:19) with a false message (2:21-23)

They Went Out From Us But They Were Not Of Us

1 Jn. 2:19

- “But they were not out of us”: the “antichrists” were not sent by those “doing the will of God” (2:17)—were neither sent nor approved by those who allowed the truth, with which God anointed them (2:20-21), to live in them and teach them (2:24, 27)
- When the antichrists departed, they did not take with them the message of truth (2:21; “every lie is not out of [ἐκ] the truth”) but were engaged in lying and denying (2:21-23) and were trying to deceive those who know the truth (2:21, 26)

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 - “but that they might be revealed that they all are not out of us”
 - They are not from us and were not sent by us who are doing the will of God and they are not proclaiming the truth of God

They Went Out From Us But They Were Not Of Us

1 Jn. 2:19

- Rigid translation: “Out of us they went out, but they were not out of us; for if they were out of us, they would have continued anyhow with us; but that they might be revealed that they all are not out of us”
 - “for if they were out of us”: if they were still “doing the will of God” (2:17) and if we sent them, they would have continued with us who are “doing the will of God” and allowing the truth to live in them

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 - “but that they might be revealed that they all are not out of us”
 - They are not from us and were not sent by us who are doing the will of God and they are not proclaiming the truth of God

They Went Out From Us But They Were Not Of Us

1 Jn. 2:19

- Smoother translation: “They went out from us, but they were not from us; for if they were from us, they would have continued with us; but (they left) that they may be revealed that they all are not from us”
 - ἐξ ἡμῶν (“from us”) occurs 4 times in 1 Jn. 2:19
 - “They went out from us”—they left us (the believers)
 - “but they were not from us”—not sent by us
 - “if they were from us”—if we sent them
 - “they all are not from us”—we did not send them

Key Words & Phrases

- **Sin** (all forms: 27 times)
 - ἁμαρτάνω, *hamartanō* (verb; 10 times)
 - 1:10; 2:1 (2); 3:6 (2); 3:8, 9; 5:16 (2), 18
 - ἁμαρτία, *hamartia* (noun; 17 times)
 - 1:7, 8, 9 (2); 2:2, 12; 3:4 (2), 5 (2), 8, 9; 4:10; 5:16 (2); 5:17 (2)
- **Know**, γινώσκω, *ginōskō* (25 times)
 - “to know, come to know, recognize, understand”
 - 2:3 (2), 4-5, 13, 14 (2), 18, 29; 3:1 (2), 6, 16, 19, 20, 24; 4:2, 6 (2), 7, 8, 13, 16; 5:2, 20

Key Words & Phrases

- **Love** (all forms: 52 times)
 - ἀγαπάω, *agapaō* (verb; root word; 28 times): to love
 - 2:10, 15 (2); 3:10-11, 14 (2); 3:18, 23; 4:7 (2), 8, 10 (2), 11 (2), 12, 19 (2), 20 (3), 21 (2), 5:1 (2), 2 (2)
 - with “command/commandment” (3:23; 4:21; 5:2-3; cf. Jn. 13:34; 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12; 2 Jn. 1:5-6)
 - “love one another” (1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12)
 - ἀγάπη, *agapē* (noun; 18 times)
 - 2:5, 15; 3:1, 16-17; 4:7-10, 12, 16 (3), 17, 18 (3); 5:3
 - ἀγαπητοί, *agapētoi* (adj.; 6 times): dearly loved ones
 - 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11 (cf. 2 Pet. 1:17; 3:1, 8, 14, 15, 17)

Key Words & Phrases

- **Know**, οἶδα, *oida* (15 times)
 - “to know, to possess information; recognize, realize, to come to know; to understand, to be able to use knowledge”
 - 2:11, 20, 21 (2), 29; 3:2, 5, 14-15, 13, 15 (2), 18-20
- **Abide**, μένω, *menō* (24 times)
 - to abide, remain, continue, stay, live, dwell; “to be in a state that begins and continues, yet may or may not end or stop. To abide in Christ is to follow his example of a life obedient to the will of God”
 - 2:6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24 (3), 27 (2), 28; 3:6, 9, 14, 15, 17, 24 (2); 4:12, 13, 15, 16 (3)

Key Words & Phrases

- **To do/make/practice/produce** (13 times)
 - ποιέω, *poieō* (verb): “a generic term of action or performance”
 - 1:6, 10; 2:17; 2:29; 3:4 (2), 7-10, 22; 5:2, 10
 - “practicing the truth” (1:6; cf. Jn. 3:21)
 - “practicing righteousness” (2:29; 3:7, 10; cf. Mt. 6:1; Rev. 22:11)
 - “practicing sin” (3:4, 8-9; see Jn. 8:34; Jas. 5:15; 1 Pet. 2:22→2 Cor. 5:21)

Key Words & Phrases

- **To be born/conceived**, γεννάω, *gennaō* (10 times)
 - 2:29; 3:9 (2); 4:7; 5:1 (3), 4, 18 (2)
- **Little children**, τέκνια, *teknia* (7 times)
 - an endearing term, as in “dear children”
 - 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; cf. Jn. 13:33
- **Children**, τέκνον, *teknon* (5 times)
 - 3:1, 2, 10 (2); 5:2
- **Children**, παιδίον, *paidion* (2 times)
 - sometimes means infant; but usually equiv. to παις (child) with possible implication of close relationship
 - 2:14, 18

Key Words & Phrases

- **Truth**, ἀλήθεια, *alētheia* (noun; 9 times)
 - truth, truthfulness; corresponding to reality
 - 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21 (2); 3:18-19; 4:6; 5:6
- **True**, ἀληθινός, *alēthinos* (adjective; 4 times)
 - true, genuine
 - 2:8; 5:20 (3)
- **True**, ἀληθής, *alēthēs* (adjective; 2 times)
 - true, genuine, reliable, trustworthy, valid
 - 2:8, 27

Key Words & Phrases

- **Write/am writing**, γράφω, *graphō* (7-8 times)
 - Present tense; carries the discourse forward
 - 1:4; 2:1, 7, 8, 12, 13 (3x in Majority; 2x in GNT)
- **Wrote**, ἔγραψα, *egrapsa* (5-6 times)
 - Before v. 14—present tense; v. 14ff.—aorist
 - Aorist tense; stops or pauses the forward movement of the discourse and summarizes what was previously stated
 - 2:14 (2x in Majority; 3x in GNT), 21, 26; 5:13

Key Words & Phrases

- **Righteous**, δίκαιος, *dikaios* (6 times)
 - “right, upright; refers to God's proper standards and actions, expressed in the covenants; as a noun it refers to a person in accord with God's standards, in proper relationship with God”
 - 1:9; 2:1, 29; 3:7 (2), 12
- **Righteousness**, δικαιοσύνη, *dikaionē* (3 times)
 - “what is right, justice, the act of doing what is in agreement with God's standards, the state of being in proper relationship with God”
 - 2:29; 3:7, 10

Key Words & Phrases

- **Life**, ζωή, zōē (13 times)
 - “in NT spiritual life of deliverance from the proper penalty of sin . . . θάνατος” (Mounce)
 - In 1:1, “concerning the word of life,” indicates the contents of John's letter and anticipates the main verb ἀπαγγέλλομεν (*apangellomen*, “we proclaim”), which is introduced in verse 3.
 - John does not immediately identify Jesus in 1 John, just as he does not in the Book of John: “Jesus is not actually named until the end of the Prologue (1:17), he does not come onto the stage until 1:29, and he does not speak until 1:38. . . .” (Culy, *1, 2, 3 John: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, p. 1)

Key Words & Phrases

- Some believe “the word of life” (v. 1; cf. Phil. 2:16) to be a reference to “the Word of life”—in other words, to Jesus as the living Logos (Word), rather than to the gospel as “the message of life”
 - However, it is “the life” that is “picked up, explained and personified in the following verse [v. 2]” (Culy, p. 5)
 - As we will see in our examination of the other 5 occurrences of *logos* (“word”), none of those occurrences refers to Jesus
 - Perhaps John's meaning is this: “(Here is what we announce to you) concerning the word of life . . . Now, Life was revealed . . .” (Culy, p. 1)

Key Words & Phrases

- **Life**, ζωή, zōē (13 times)
 - 1:1, 2 (2); 2:25; 3:14-15; 5:11 (2), 12 (2), 13, 16, 20
 - All occurrences of αἰώνιος (*aiōnios*, “eternal”) occur as an adjective describing “life”
- **Live**, ζάω (*zaō*) (1 time; root of ζωή, zōē)
 - 4:9

Key Words & Phrases

- **Beginning**, ἀρχή, *archē* (8 times)
 - “from the first”; of time? Or from the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry/beginning of the proclamation of the gospel/beginning of life in Christ?
 - Some understand v. 1 as a beginning before time
 - We must use context to determine which
 - 1:1—“That which” (“O, *hō*; relative pronoun, neuter singular; “what” or “the thing which”)
 - “The neuter gender may be explained by the fact that the writer is talking about his and other eyewitnesses' broad experience of the incarnate Jesus” (Culy, *1, 2, 3 John: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, p. 2)

Key Words & Phrases

- **Beginning**, ἀρχή, *archē* (8 times)
 - Rather than “in the beginning” (Jn. 1:1), John now uses “from the beginning” (1:1), which seems to refer to the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry
 - The only context where “from the beginning” is clearly referring to the beginning of time in 1 John is 3:8—“from the beginning the devil has been sinning”
 - 1:1; 2:7, 13-14, 24 (2); 3:8, 11

Key Words & Phrases

- **Death**, θάνατος, *thanatos* (6 times)
 - “in NT spiritual death, as opposed to ζωή in its spiritual sense, in respect of a forfeiture of salvation” (Mounce)
 - 3:14 (2); 5:16 (3), 17
- **Word**, λόγος, *logos* (6 times)
 - “word, spoken or written, often with a focus on the content of a communication” (Mounce)
 - 1:1, 10; 2:5, 7, 14; 3:18

Key Words & Phrases

- **Overcome**, νικάω, *nikaō* (6 times)
 - “to overcome, overpower; to conquer, triumph”
 - A key word in Johannine literature: occurs once in the Book of John, 17 times in Revelation and four times in the rest of the NT (3 times in Romans and once in Luke)
 - 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:4 (2), 5

Key Words & Phrases

- **Light**, φω̃ς, *phōs* (6 times)
 - 1:5, 7 (2); 2:8-10
- **Fellowship**, κοιωνία, *koinōnia* (4 times)
 - “the close association between persons, emphasizing what is common between them; by extension: participation, sharing, communion, contribution, gift, the outcome of such close relationships” (Mounce)
 - “a relationship of joint participation in the work and life of God” (Culy, *1, 2, 3 John: A Handbook on the Greek Text*)
 - 1:3 (2), 6, 7

Memory Verse Review ***(Philemon—2 Peter)***

- Philemon 20—“Yes, brother...”
- Heb. 3:12—“Beware, brothers...”
- Jas. 1:22—“But be...”
- 1 Pet. 4:16—“But if anyone...”
- 2 Pet. 3:18—“But grow...”

Memory Verse for 1 John

1:7

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (NKJV)