

Winter Bible Study ~ January 2021
John's Epistles (I, II and III John)
LIVING with ASSURANCE

Let us Read I John, chapter 1 together...

Epistle...

Of the 27 Books in the New Testament, 21 are Epistles... those attributed to Paul for the reason of strengthening and encouraging **The Church** in which he had so many friends and had labored so diligently. In them he speaks of the *Nature* and *Unity* of **The Church**, and the responsibilities of the believer(s) as followers of **CHRIST**. They are: Romans; I and II Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; I and II Thessalonians; I and II Timothy; Titus and Philemon. The others, Hebrews; James, I and II Peter; I, II and III John and Jude.

Question? What is the difference between an Epistle and a *Letter*?

Answer. _____

An Epistle is in the form of a *Letter* but aimed at a *person or boarder audience* (**The Church** or **Churches**)

Question? How did Paul begin his Epistles?

Answer. _____

Question? Do the Epistle of John, name the Author? Yes or No? **Answer.** _____
(But the internal evidence says the author is The Apostle John... John's Epistle is addressed to believers throughout **CHRISTendom**, especially in Churches-houses around the City of Ephesus).

Question? What other Books of the New Testament, does not Name, its Author?

Answer. _____

The Apostle John gives the *reasons* for his writing of the Gospel of John, the Three Epistles, and the Revelation, each attributed to Authorship...

- In The Gospel – John 20: 31 – “But these things are written, that ye may believe that **JESUS is CHRIST, The SON of GOD**; and that believing ye might have life through **HIS NAME.**”
- In The Epistle – I 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.”
(2 John 6; 3 John 5)
- In The Revelation 1: 19 – “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, the things which shall be hereafter.”

I John is a Book that gives **ASSURANCE of Salvation**... the word **ASSURANCE** in Greek, *hupostasis*, (hoop-os'-tas-is) meaning (to possess) standing under a guaranteed agreement (title-deed).

Underline “know” or, “we know” or, “ye know” in this Epistle...

(I John 2: 3, 4, 5, 18, 20, 21 (2 times), 29 (2 times), 3: 2, 5, 14, 15, 19, 24; 4: 2, 6, 13; 5: 2, 13, 15 (2 times), 18, 19, 20 (2 times). 26 times

Highlights...

I John, Chapter 1...

- a. I John 1: 1, goes back to “from the beginning” as in the Gospel of John 1: 1, (Eternity Past)
 - “We have *heard*” – John *heard* **JESUS** speak (ear-gate)
 - “We have *seen*” – John *saw* **JESUS** (eye-gate)
 - “We have *looked upon*” – John *looked to* **JESUS, The SAVIOR, to save...**
 - “We have *handled*” – John had *felt* **The MASTER’S Heartbeat** – John 13: 23; 21:20, 24

- b. I John 1: 3, **JESUS is The SOURCE** of *Fellowship*
CHRISTian fellowship means ‘sharing in the things of **CHRIST**. Paul used the word “*KOINONIA*” when speaking of *praying, teaching The WORD, The LORD’S Supper* and *Giving*.

In I John 1: 5-7, John says, we have *fellowship*, if (since) “we walk in The LIGHT” ...
JESUS is The LIGHT!

In I John 1: 9, John says we retain *fellowship*, by “confession(s) of *sin*” ...
It is the **CHRISTian’s** bar of soap—it cleanses from the *inside* out!

Let us Read I John, chapter 2 together...

Highlights...

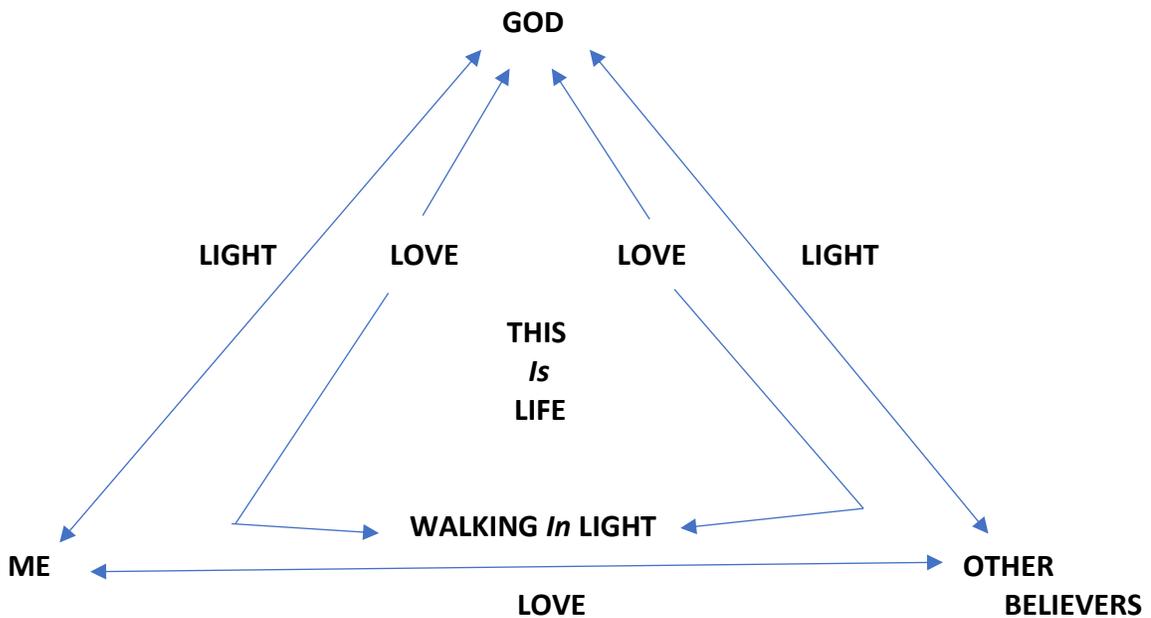
I John, Chapter 2...

- a. In I John 2: 1, 2... **JESUS CHRIST is our ADVOCATE. ADVOCATE** in the Greek is “*parakletos*”, (par-ak’-lay-tos), meaning, a legal *advocate* who makes the right judgment-call because of being close enough to the situation. One, giving evidence that stands up in Court.
JESUS CHRIST is our ADVOCATE (our **Attorney**) if (since) we *sin*. **HE** has paid for our *sin(s)*; as we confess, **HE** restores us to full *fellowship*.
- b. In I John 2: 3-11, *obedience* to **The LORD** and **HIS WORD** is evidence that we belong to **HIM**, which in turn produces **Love** for the Brethren.

I John 2: 11, is one of the best test one can apply to the question:

“How can I be sure I am a **CHRISTian**?”

The **CHRISTian Life** is like a *triangle*:



- c. In I John 2: 15-17, John says, “we must not **Love** the world.”
 Note, verse 16...

“Lust of the flesh”	These are the things of the world.
“Lust of the eye” -----	Every sin can be placed
“Pride of Life”	under one of these.

- d. In I John 2: 18-28, John places emphasis on “*many* Anti-Christ*s*”.
 This is in reference to “the last days” (and we are in them) and much false teachings by “false teachers.”
 I John 2: 19, There will be a departure from **The Doctrine of GOD**, leading to leaving **The Church; The Faith in GOD**.
 I John 2; 22, 23, denying **The Deity of JESUS**, yet calling themselves “**CHRISTians.**”

Let us Read I John, chapter 3 together...

Highlights...

I John, Chapter 3... Note, first,

1. **The FATHER'S Love** for us – v. 1. We do not expect to be the “*sons of GOD*” – WE ARE! We are *now* “*the sons of GOD*,” but we shall be *like HIM* – v. 2.
2. In v. 8, and on we see “*good*” vs. “*evil works*,” but the climax is verse 24, for the **CHRISTian**, “Hereby we *know* that **HE** abideth in us, by **The SPIRIT** which **HE (JESUS)** hath given us.” [JESUS said: “If you obey **MY** commands, you will remain in **MY Love**.” (John 15:10) Here John says: “Those who obey **HIS** commands live *in HIM*.” To live *in CHRIST* and to remain *in CHRIST'S Love* is the same thing. To live (or remain) *in CHRIST* is the most important thing in our lives (I John 2: 28). But to live *in HIM*, we *must obey HIS commands*.

Question? How do we know that **CHRIST lives in us?**

Answer. _____

The HOLY SPIRIT is CHRIST'S SPIRIT. If The HOLY SPIRIT is in us, CHRIST also is in us.]

Let us Read I John, chapter 4 together...

Highlights...

I John, Chapter 4...

As in John's times, there were many people who were *teaching, preaching, and prophesying* through ‘*various spirits*.’ It is the same in our times. We *must*...

1. “Try the spirits.” Do not believe everything that *seems* sincere and good.

There are false spirits ready to try us every day.

Question? How do we examine “the spirits?” **Answer.** _____

We *must* “test the spirits to see whether they are *from GOD*.” That is, test what the spirits are saying; examine the words of anyone who claims to be speaking “*through The HOLY SPIRIT*,” because there are many false teachers and false prophets in the world, and they are constantly trying to deceive us. (Read Mark 13: 22; Acts 20: 29-31)

Note, v. 4, **The HOLY SPIRIT** indwells every believer... The **CHRISTian** will always hear **The WORD of GOD**—the *preacher, the teacher*—but the unsaved will not hear... v. 6, “We are of **GOD**: he that knoweth **GOD** heareth us; he that is not of **GOD** heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of **TRUTH**, and the spirit of error.”

2. The great passage on **LOVE** by John is found in verses, 7-21... Note how many times the word "**LOVE**" is found (underline them). How many? _____ (27)
 John has written: **GOD is LIGHT** (I John 1: 5). John has also written: "Whosoever **loves** his brother lives in **The LIGHT**" (I John 2: 10). Now John says: **GOD is LOVE** (I John 4: 8). Everyone who **loves** has been born of **GOD** (v. 7)
GOD'S LOVE is like water in a pipe. If the lower end of the pipe becomes blocked, no more water will be able to flow into the top end. We are like pipes, through which **GOD'S LOVE flows**.

Let us Read I John, chapter 5 together...

Highlights...

I John, Chapter 5...

1. Verses 1-4, John says, **Faith in GOD through JESUS CHRIST**, produces "victory" over the world. Here John adds to what he has written in I John 4: 2, "Hereby know ye **The SPIRIT of GOD**: Every spirit that confesseth that **JESUS CHRIST** is come in the flesh is of **GOD**."
 [Every believer *in CHRIST* is born of **GOD**; that is, every believer *is GOD'S child*. If we **Love The FATHER**, we must also **love HIS children**. In I John 4: 20, John has said that *if we do not love our brother, we do not love GOD*. Here John says that *if we love GOD, we will also love our brother*. By loving our brother, we prove that we **love GOD**. By **loving GOD**, we prove that we **love** our brother. In fact, **Love** for **GOD** and **love** for our brother is the same above. One **love** cannot exist without the other.
- Question?** What is **Love** for **GOD**? **Answer.** _____
Question? What are **HIS** commands? **Answer.** _____

GOD'S commands are not burdensome, because **HE** gives us the power to *obey* them (Matthew 11: 28-20). **GOD'S** commands are not burdensome, because we have the power to "overcome the world" – that is, overcome Satan.

Question? How do we obtain this victory? **Answer.** _____
 Through faith, **CHRIST lives in us**. **CHRIST** has already overcome Satan (John 16: 33). Therefore, through **CHRIST**, we too can overcome Satan (I John 4: 4)
 In I John 2: 14, John has written: "**The WORD of GOD lives in you**, and you have overcome the evil one." To have **The WORD of GOD live in us** is the same as to have **CHRIST live in us**. **CHRIST HIMSELF is GOD'S WORD** (I John 1: 1)]

2. Verse 6, seems to be a hindrance to scholars... There are three that bear witness to **The Truth of Salvation by Faith in CHRIST...**
- **WATER** – **The WORD of GOD** (John 19: 34, 35)
 - **BLOOD** – *The Death of CHRIST* for our *sins* (Ephesians 1: 7, **JESUS** was manifested as our **SAVIOR** and *Atoning sacrifice by BLOOD—HIS own BLOOD—*shed for us on **The Cross**)
 - **SPIRIT** – *Truth* (Acts 1: 4, 8—**The HOLY SPIRIT** testifies that **JESUS CHRIST is The SON of GOD** and **The SAVIOR** of the world—John 15: 26; John 16: 13) **Question?** In verse 7, is **The FATHER, SON (WORD), HOLY SPIRIT, ONE?** YES! It is through **The HOLY SPIRIT** that believers overcome the world (v. 4). Through all these great works, **The SPIRIT** testifies that **JESUS CHRIST** is indeed **The SON of GOD!**
In verse 8, **The HOLY SPIRIT** works in our hearts when we are *born again*. **HE** takes **The WORD** and applies the shed **BLOOD of CHRIST** to our hearts.

3. The Key of this Epistle is found in verses 11-15! Remember it!
“Beloved, if **GOD** so *loved* us, we ought also to *love* one another. No man hath seen **GOD** at any time. If we *love* one another, **GOD** dwelleth in us, and **HIS love** is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in **HIM**, and **HE** in us, because **HE** hath given us of **HIS SPIRIT**. And we have seen and od testify that **The FATHER** sent **The SON to be The SAVIOR** of the world. Whosoever shall confess that **JESUS is The SON of GOD**, **GOD** dwelleth in him, and he in **GOD**.”

John in his Epistle, gives us Seven tests, that we can examine ourselves, to see if we are “**Living with ASSURANCE**” ... they begin with the words, “If we say” and “He that saith.”

Examine yourself...

- I John 1: 6 -- _____ (False fellowship)
- I John 1: 8 -- _____ (False Sanctity)
- I John 1: 10 -- _____ (False Righteousness)
- I John 2: 4 _____ (False Allegiance)
- I John 2: 6 _____ (False Behavior)
- I John 2: 9 _____ (False Spirituality)
- I John 4: 20 _____ (False Speech)

Let us Read 2 John together...

Question? To whom is John's Second *Epistle* or Letter, written to? **Answer.** _____
Elder in the Greek is a *Leader* of The Local **CHRISTian** congregation. The word derives from the Greek *presbyteros*, (pres-boo'-ter-os) which means "elder" or "senior." A mature man having seasoned judgment.

Question? John wrote this brief *Epistle* or Letter to "the elect lady and her children."
Who is She?

Answer. _____ The contents of verses 5, 10 and 12 indicate that this "Letter", was a personal note to a real person (Not to a Local Church)

Highlights...

1. The Central Message – "For **The Truth's** sake." **TRUTH** is the theme of this Letter!

Question? **WHO** does John mean by **The TRUTH**? John 15: 26—**The HOLY SPIRIT**; John 14: 6—**JESUS CHRIST**; John 1: 14—**GOD is TRUTH**? **Answer:** _____

Did you notice, in the Introductions to most of the New Testament *Epistles* or Letters, the writers ask for "grace" and "peace" for their readers (Romans 1: 7; Ephesians 1: 2). But here John adds "mercy," *eleos* (el'-eh-os) meaning, "covenant-loyalty," "covenant-love"; as it is, *mercy* is defined by "loyalty to **GOD'S Covenant.**"

2. The Structure of this Letter –

- "Walk in **Truth** and **Love**" – Verses, 1-6

Some of this "chosen lady's children" were "walking in **The Truth.**" That is, they were walking according to **The Gospel**; they were walking in *obedience* to **CHRIST**.

To **Love** is to *obey* **JESUS**. To *obey* **JESUS** is to **Love**. *Obedience* is the *fruit* and the *proof* of **Love**. We show our **Love** by our *obedience* (John 14: 15; I John 5: 3)

- Guard **The Doctrine of CHRIST** – Verses, 7-13

"He that abideth in *the doctrine of CHRIST*, he hath both **The FATHER** and **The SON.**" (v. 9)

Many false teachers were traveling among the **CHRISTian** communities, who would not confess that **JESUS CHRIST** was here in the flesh. These were deceivers and anti-christs. (I John 4: 1-2). They did not believe in the humanity of **CHRIST** and denied **HIS Incarnation**.

We are not to support anyone *preaching* and *teaching* a false doctrine. There are so many *cults* and "*isms*" in our day. John says, if we support them, we become partakers of that evil doctrine—meaning we share in spreading a false doctrine.

Even **CHRISTIans** can be deceived by the antichrist(s) and by deceivers (false teachers and false prophets). (Mark 13: 22, 23; I John 2: 18, 22; 4: 1-3) Satan is the master of the antichrist(s) and all deceivers and evildoers. He tries to make **CHRISTIans** give up their **Faith in CHRIST**. He tries to create *doubt* and *fear* in their minds. He says that **CHRIST** is not really **The SON of GOD**. John gives us this warning: So, do not give up your **Faith in CHRIST**. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for—that is, your *reward*, your *Heavenly inheritance*, your *Salvation*. (Read Hebrew 10: 35, 36)

Watch out for “Anyone who “trangeseth” that is, “runs ahead”; who is not satisfied with **The Gospel of CHRIST**. He “runs ahead” seeking new teachings, new philosophies, new worldly wisdom. Such person thinks that he is wiser than other **CHRISTIans**. Such a person who *leaves CHRIST’S teachings* also leaves **GOD**. But the person who *humbly continues in CHRIST’S teachings* has both **GOD** and **CHRIST**—and **True Wisdom** as well. (Read John 14: 21-23; I John 2: 23)

Let us Read 3 John together...

This Third Letter deals with “*personalities*”, a combination of *characteristics* or *qualities*...

- GAIUS – Walking in TRUTH – vss. 1-8
- DIOTREPHES – Loves Pre-eminence (the fact of surpassing all others) – vss. 9-11
- DEMETRIUS – Good Report of All Men – vss. 12-14

1. Central Message.

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” (3 John 2)

- GAIUS... [There are three other men named Gaius in the New Testament: Gaius, a **CHRISTian**, and traveling companion of Paul along with Aristarchus Acts 19: 29; Gaius, is the same Gaius who has a residence in Derbe, Acts 20: 4; Gaius, Romans 16: 23, here Paul sends greetings to the **CHRISTIans** in Rome, mentioning Gaius as one he baptized while in Corinth and stayed at his house, as a host for the traveling missionary]

John calls GAIUS, “the beloved” four times. This **man of GOD** was a source of great JOY for John. He had cared for all of “the fellows – helpers of **The TRUTH**; traveling *preachers* of **The Gospel**.”

The TRUTH in this good man was **The LORD JESUS CHRIST**. Many of them GAIUS had never even met before; they were like *strangers* to him (Hebrews 13: 3).

These traveling *preachers* had gone out to *preach* for the sake of **The NAME**—that is, for the sake of **CHRIST** (Acts 5: 41; James 2: 7) **The NAME** above every name! (Philippians 2: 9)

In John's time, traveling *preachers* could not afford to stay in hotels. They relied on the *hospitality* of believers wherever they went. They did not stay with pagans—that is, unbelievers, lest they be accused by unbelievers of *preaching* only for the sake of food and lodging. [In the same way, we also need to be always ready to help and support those who go out in **CHRIST NAME** to serve **HIM** and to *preach The Gospel* (John 13: 20). Some of us are called by **GOD** to go out into the world to *serve CHRIST*; other **CHRISTIANS** are called to stay at home and *serve CHRIST* by providing *hospitality, support, and prayer* for those who do go out. Thus, all of us—whether we go or stay—we are called to work together for **The TRUTH**.

- DIOTREPES...

This man wanted *all* the “*praise*” and “*glory*.” He was guilty of...

1. Not receiving John – v. 9. Diotrepes a *Leader* himself, rejected John's authority. He wanted to keep all the authority for himself. He sought *to be first*. He had forgotten what **JESUS** said: “. . . many who are first will be last, and the last first.” (Mark 10: 31). He was sick with “the desire to exalt oneself” – Matthew 23: 12; Mark 10: 43-44.
2. Making malicious statements against John – v. 10. (Diotrepes, would not receive traveling *preachers*—*missionaries*. He expelled (excommunicating) from the Church-gatherings those who did welcome (put up) the *missionaries* in their homes. If John were able to come, he would expose Diotrepes...

- DEMETRIUS...

There is only one verse about him; it gives us a good lesson in **CHRISTIAN** character. His name indicates that he was a convert from paganism. Demetrius spoke only good of all men and of **The Gospel** itself. He adorned **The Doctrine of CHRIST**. Others testified of his faithfulness to **CHRIST**.

We can be a Gaius, helping spread **The Gospel** – or we can be a Diotrepes, hindering **The KINGdom**, for personal attention – or a Demetrius, adorning **The Gospel of JESUS CHRIST!**

Question? Am I Living with **ASSURANCE**? That is...

- Fellowship *with GOD*?
- Remaining *with GOD*?
- Living as **GOD'S** Child?
- Living with **GOD'S Love**?
- Living as a Conqueror *with GOD*?
- Faithful *with The TRUTH of GOD*?
- Hospitable because of **GOD'S Love** for me?

Answer. _____