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**“Introduction To The Epistle Of 1st John”**

There are some individuals who have no assurance about their salvation. One day they think they are saved; the next day they think they are lost.

They are always praying God doesn't come back just then or that they are right with God.

If there is any book in the Bible that will assure a believer of his salvation, it is 1st John, because he gives us certain truths and principles of the Christian Life.

\* Robert Law calls 1st John, The Test of Life.

As we go through this marvelous epistle, each one of us will have an opportunity to examine ourselves, to see if we be in the faith, to prove ourselves, lest we be reprobates as Paul tells us. 2Cor. 13:5

A Christian should not be going through life in doubt of his relationship with Christ.

-He is a new creature, old things are past away and all things are made new.

-His habitual walk is in the light of God's word.

-He is not perfect by no means, but he does not practice sin.

-When he fails and stumbles, Christ is there to pick him up and clean him.

-His life is to be in agreement with God and by the power of His Spirit.

-Is John the beloved.

-Polycarp 155 A. D. attributes it to John.

-Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis 80-155 A. D.

-Irenaeus 140-203 A. D., Clement of Alexandria 155-215 A. D.

-Tertullian 150-222 A. D. quoted it 50 times.

-Origen 185-253 A. D., Cyprian 200-258 A. D.

-Eusebius acknowledged 1st John as written by John 325 A. D.

All this only proves to us the stupidity of modern men to dispute something that God has already allowed to be authenticated and confirmed centuries before.

As man boasts about his wisdom and knowledge and sets himself up as the authority, he has done only one thing, that in professing themselves to be wise, they have become fools.

\* Form criticism and redaction criticism in extreme.

\* John's Credentials

4:14 - Eye witness.

-Date - 85-100 A.D.

-Written to no specific body, but somewhere in Asia Minor.

-To be a general Epistle (Catholic) meaning universal.

-Has no opening or closing salutation.

-Believed to have been written from Ephesus.

- According to church tradition, John spent his latter years in Ephesus as an elder and pastor-teacher, after being boiled in oil and Patmos.
- Paul founded and spent three years in Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey. Act. 19-20
- To John's presence at Ephesus, Justin Martyr attests by telling us that John prophesied of a 1,000 year reign that believers would dwell on earth.
- Polycarpt, Iranaeus tells us John died at Ephesus, so it is believed he wrote it at Ephesus. Not only is this Epistle a test of life for the believer, but it is polemic, it was written to combat heresy 85-100 A. D. , 2nd, 3rd generation after John's conversion

<u>Gospel</u>	<u>Epistle</u>
Objective	Subjective
Historical	Moral
Son of God	God in the flesh
Deity	Hu manity

Heresy is identified as Gnosticism, 2nd Century heresy.

1. Gnosticism, Dr. Orr, "A species of religious philosophy."
2. Dr. G walkins "is Christianity perverted by learning and speculation. "

### Source

- Platonis m - Philosophy.
- Buddism - Antagonism between matter and evil. --
- Persian religion - duelis m of good and evil.

### Gnosticism

- Gnosis - Knowledge.
- Claimed special and mysterious knowledge.
- Believed all matter was evil and spirit was good.
- Consequently, God being Spirit, couldn't have any direct connection with matter.
- Since that was so, God according to them couldn't have created the world.
- Created by one of the many emanations or aeons that radiated out from God.
- Until one of these emanations was so far removed from God that it rebelled against God and was responsible for the creation oi evil.

Now because this was their belief, much error was being taught and propagated about God and about a Christian and his relation to God. Since they said matter was evil and spirit good, they concluded that one could only reach God by climbing up these emanations by this supreme knowledge, because God could not inhabit matter.

- Reaching and attaining a place of sinlessness, 1-8, sin nature. 1:10, root of sin.
- Having reached perfection, they could indulge in any and every pleasure of the flesh. 1Jn. 1:5; 2:6, 29; 3:3, 6, 8c; 4:17; 5:4
- Professed to know God while not loving their fellow man. 1Jn. 4:7-8, 12, 20-21
- Denied Jesus as the Christ because he occupied a body. 1Jn. 1:1; 2:22; 4:2-3
- Confessed to have life with God. 1Jn. 5:11-12

### **Divided men into two classes**

1. Psuchikoi - (Psuche) (Soul) - life principle every living creature has.

-They could never obtain past this level.

2. Pneumatikoi - (Pnuma) - spirit that made man one with God.

-Release of Pnuma by this special knowledge.

-In Christ we are all on the same level!

### **Gnostics**

1. Docetist - (Dakeo) to see, taught Christ was a Dphantom and left no footprints

2. Cerinthian - Cerinthus was an antagonist of John. He taught that the Spirit of Christ descended on Jesus at his water baptism and that it left him prior to his crucifixion. 1Jn. 2:22; 4:3; 5:6

Eusebius tells the story, how John went to a public house in Ephesus to bathe, he saw Cerinthus inside and refused to enter and said, "Let us flee, lest even the bath house fall because of Cerinthus, the enemy of truth is within."

### **Gnosticism was manifested in two extremes**

1. Asceticism - Early signs

- Col.2:16-23 - closely related to Ebionitism.

- Col.21-23 - neglecting of the body.

- 1 Tim.4:3, 6:20-21

2. Immorality and perversity.

- 2 im. 3:1-6

- Tit. 1:16

-2Pet. 2:12-20

-Jude 4, 8, 18-19, 21

They denied their relationship to God by the lack of:

1. Truth - Doctrinal obligation, faith in Christ.

2. Righteousness - Moral obligation, by obedience.

3. Love - Social obligation, by being a doer.

They claimed to have fellowship with God, have knowledge about God and that they lived in the light of God, but the word exposed them as liars, false teachers, false prophets and antichrists.

### **Reasons for writing 1st John**

1. 1:4 - That the believer's joy may be full.

2. 2:1 - That the believer not make practice of sin.

3. 2:12-14 - That the believer may be assured of our relationship with God.

4. 2:21 - That the believer knew the truth.

5. 2:26 - That the believer be warned about deceivers.

6. 5:13 - That the believer have the assurance of eternal life and continue to believe.