



ABIDE - A SERIES THRU 1 JOHN

LESSON 1: THE DOORWAY

Background

Although the epistle we call 1 John does not identify its author, the early church ascribed it to the apostle John and its language is very similar to John's Gospel. Most conservative scholars believe the book was written in the late first century (after AD 70). John wrote to Christians but the book does not identify any specific church or region. Many have argued that John wrote to Christians in Asia Minor, perhaps even in Ephesus.

The Occasion

John wrote to warn his readers about false teachers that he refers to as "antichrists" (2:18), who sought to deceive them (2:26). Rather than delineating and refuting every bad doctrine, John mostly focused on re-affirming his readers in the truth they already knew. Knowing the truth is, after all, the best antidote to doctrinal deception. Nevertheless, we can glean that these antichrists likely denied that John's readers had eternal life and denied the incarnation. They may have taught ideas were later a part of gnosticism.

1. **Deceivers and deceptions:** One of the great benefits of studying church history is seeing how false doctrine frequently crept in so that some Christians taught it as Bible doctrine. By the middle of the second century, a pagan religion known as gnosticism was flourishing and being taught by persons who considered themselves Christians. There were other false doctrines before and after gnosticism, and many of the doctrines died out only to revive later in church history under different labels. Many remain influential among Christians today.

— When we talk about false teachers are deceivers what we mean is not simply someone who teaches a different view of some verses than what we believe.

— We are talking about those that undermine the core tenets of Christianity.

— Why have so many deceivers managed to successfully deceive Christians on core tenets of the Faith?

— How have the deceivers carried out their mischief?

2. **From the beginning:** If we compare 1 John 1:1 and John 1:1 they open with similar references to "from the beginning." In John's Gospel he meant the beginning of time in Genesis 1, but here he means the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry.

3. **The Prologue — the doorway to 1 John:** The first four verses of 1 John serve as the prologue or doorway to his epistle. These verses tell us what the book is about and the source of the information John wants to share with his readers.

— according to vv. 1-2, what did Jesus teach John and the other apostles, and HOW did Jesus teach it?

— according to vv. 3-4, why did John write 1 John?

— what is "fellowship"?

— On Jesus manifesting God see John 14:6-11

— On abiding and joy, see John 14:18-21, 15:1-11

4. **God is light:** John told his readers in v. 5 a foundation truth he heard from Jesus — God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But what does that mean? What does light represent and what are the implications of John's statement?

— On "light" see John 1:4-9; 3:16-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46

5. **A negative and positive principle:** John draws some principles from the foundational v. 5 about how sinful people can enjoy fellowship with a holy God.