



A STUDY IN
The 1st, 2nd., & 3rd. Epistles of John
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With my whole heart have I sought thee; O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Ps.119:10,11

John, the beloved disciple, the son of Zebedee and the brother of James, called by Jesus "*son of thunder*," is the author of these three short letters. The First letter is primarily pastoral in nature, designed to address multiple subject matters confronting Christian assemblies both then and today. As it was in the 1st century of the Church, so it is in the 20th century, that the church battles against "*syncretistic teaching*" [syncretism: combining different beliefs, philosophies, culture] which would in effect be non-biblical, therefore non-Holy Spirit inspired [2nd Tim. 3:16-17], and *any modification* to *biblical* doctrine should be met with unrelenting rejection from the Body of Church! The more prominent movements confronting the church are these: (1.) *The Gnostic Movement* [Gnosticism: claimed a special "knowledge" (*gnosis*, Gk) which others believers did not possess]: This "knowledge," centered around the concept of the "*essential goodness of spiritual things* and the inherent *evil of all material things*. Naturally, if all physical things are evil, Gnosticism would have a problem with God taking on the form (physical body) of a servant (Philip. 2:7). John makes it undeniably clear, that Jesus was in fact "fully man!" [1st Jn.1:1] "*and our hands have handled*"

Brief summary: Gnostics provided several ways where-by one could rise above the damning evil chains of the material world and enter into the eternal goodness and truth of the spiritual. "Special Knowledge" was the primary point of entrance! They believed then and now, that "knowledge", not God, is the Savior! *Consider: 2nd. Tim. 3:1-9 esp. vs. 7*

The Gospel written by John emphasized the eternality and pre-existence of the Christ who became flesh. (2.) The second important theme of the first epistle, emphasizes *Our Lord's full humanity, and the believers assurance of fellowship with Him, and salvation through Him*. Christian certainty, with emphasis on the believers position in Christ highlighted through-out the letter. (3.) A third prominent theme is *Love*. This word appears twenty-plus times in the 1st. John. (4.) *Proper Christian Conduct*: From Gnosticism's growth and development among believers came the practices of Asceticism [*a life-style of self-denial & abstinence from worldly pleasures in pursuit of spiritual enlightenment*] and Antinomianism [*the belief that a Christian can live anyway they please, as long as they truly believe in God*]. They believe that "faith alone" guarantees one salvation, regardless of one's conduct.

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| 1. The Realities of the Christian Life : Ch. 1:1-2:17 <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Recognizing the Word of Life (ch. 1:1-4)B. Understanding the Character of God (ch. 1:5-7)C. Experiencing a new kind of Fellowship (ch. 1:8-10)D. Learning From Jesus<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Learning how to live (ch. 2:1-6)2. Learning how to love (ch. 2:7-17) | 3. Tests of the Christian Life <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. The Test of Righteousness (chs. 2-29-3:12)B. The Test of Love (3:13-18)C. The Test of Obedience (3:19-24) |
| 2. The Manifestations of the Christian Life <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Saints Assaulted (ch. 2:18-19)B. Saints Anointed (ch. 2:20-21)C. Saints Assured (ch. 2:22-28) | 4. The Assurances of the Christian Life <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. A Word of Instruction (4:1-6)B. A Word of Love (4:7-21)C. A Word of Faith (5:1-12)D. A Word of Victory (5:13-17)E. A Word of Confidence (5:18-21) |