

“The Central Truth: God is Light”

INTRODUCTION: First John is the first of three epistles written by the Apostle John.

1. The Johannine literature includes 5 New Testament books.
 - a. Gospel of John (written in the 80’s)
 - b. The Revelation (apocalypse) of John (c. 90-95AD)
 - c. First John
 - d. Second John
 - e. Third John

} (written in the late 90’s)
2. **Eusebius Pamphilus**, Bishop of Caesarea (Palestine), wrote the first book about church history. *The Ecclesiastical History*.
 - a. In book 3, chapter 23, Eusebius wrote (p. 104)

About this time also, the beloved disciple of Jesus, John the apostle and evangelist, still surviving, governed the churches in Asia, after his return from exile on the island, and the death of Domitian. But that he was still living until this time, it may suffice to prove, by the testimony of two witnesses. These, as maintaining sound doctrine in the church, may surely be regarded as worthy of all credit: and such were Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.
 - b. i.e., 98 AD when Trajan became Roman Emperor
 - i. Domitian (81-96) exiled John to the Isle of Patmos.
 - ii. Nerva returned John to freedom in 96-98 AD.
 - iii. Trajan became Emperor 98-117 AD.
 - c. **Irenaus**, in his book, *Against Heresies*, wrote about the apostle John (Eusebius; p. 105).

And all the presbyters of Asia, that had conferred with John the disciple of our Lord, testify that John had delivered it to them; for he continued with them until the times of Trajan.

But the church in Ephesus also, which had been founded by Paul, and where John continued to bide until the times of Trajan, is a faithful witness of the apostolic tradition.
 - d. **Clement of Alexandria** wrote this about John (Eusebius; p. 105).

Listen to a story that is no fiction, but a real history, handed down and carefully preserved, respecting the apostle John. For after the tyrant was dead, coming from the isle of Patmos to Ephesus, he went also, when called, to the neighbouring regions of the Gentiles; in some to appoint bishops, in some to institute entire new churches, in others to appoint to the ministry some of those that were pointed out by the Holy Ghost.
3. If this is true, and we have no reason to doubt the genuineness of these apostolic fathers’ accounts of events, then the *Three Epistles of John* are the last writings of the New Testament – later even than the Book of Revelation.

4. The apostle John is *obviously* the author of three letters (and therefore First John): The theology, vocabulary, themes and style of writing are identical to the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation.
5. Here is why these three little letters are so important to us: *They give us glimpses of spiritual things the early church was facing at the close of the first century and the end of the apostolic age.*
 - a. Similar to the issues of the *Seven Churches of Revelation*
 - b. Heresies, lawlessness, persecution, apostasy, loss of zeal, etc.
 - c. They speak to issues very similar to those of the 21st Century.

6. **John Stott:** *The Letters of John: TNTC; p. 56.*

The middle and end of the twentieth century are an epoch of fundamental insecurity. Everything is changing; nothing is stable. Even the Christian church, which has received 'a kingdom that cannot be shaken' and is charged to proclaim him who is 'the same yesterday and today and forever' (Hebrews 12:28; 13:8), now often speaks its message softly, shyly and without conviction. There is a widespread distrust of dogmatism and a preference for agnosticism or free thought. Many church members are filled with uncertainty and confusion. The certainty of Christian people is twofold – objective (that the Christian religion is true) and subjective (that they themselves have been born of God and possess eternal life). Both are expounded by John, who takes it for granted that this double assurance is right and healthy. His teaching about these certainties, their nature and the grounds on which they are built, urgently needs to be heard and heeded today.

7. This year is almost gone. In 2015, we have been preaching about **The Joy of the Christian life...**
 - a. Four Emphases: *Joy, Hope, Love, Confidence in the faith*
 - b. The beauty, balance, blessing of our *historical faith*
 - c. So...we've been looking at the *Three Formulae* on Sunday mornings.
 - i. The Apostles' Creed
 - ii. Baptism & church membership
 - iii. The Lord's Prayer
 - iv. The Ten Commandments
 - d. And on Sunday evenings, we've looked at
 - i. Love: The third way (1 Corinthians 13)
 - ii. Gospel according to Jonah (Missions month)
 - iii. Early New Testament epistles: 1 and 2 Thessalonians (primitive Christianity)
 - iv. The sacred supper (Lord's Supper)
 - v. The good and noble life: 7 deadly sins and 7 heavenly virtues
 - vi. **Now:** John's first epistle: *Living as the Children of Light*
 1. Last Revelation of the New Testament
 2. Beginning of the post-apostolic age

8. The *Testimony of the Early Church Fathers* informs us:
 - a. The apostle John is the author of this letter.
 - b. He wrote it from Ephesus.
 - c. Sometime around 96-100 AD
 - d. Written alongside the letters to the seven churches of Revelation

9. **Robert W. Yarbrough:** *1-3 John: ECNT; pp. 17, 21.*

Given this information, if we care to assign John's Letters to a particular historical milieu at all, it seems warranted to think of them as reflecting conditions in the region of Ephesus in the closing decades of the first century. Information of some historical significance can be inferred from Revelation 2-3 regarding this era and locale in the form of short letters from the exalted Jesus to the seven churches of the Roman province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the leading city.

The same could be said of the other two letters. All three are frank, realistic, but positive pastoral missives (not congregational creations) seeking to affirm and reinvigorate doctrinal direction, ethical urgency, relational integrity, and a forward-looking faith in God, generally in a geographical setting and temporal era in which relatively young churches were facing the challenges of longer term existence.

10. Please turn to First John 1:1-2:6. This appears to be the first section of this marvelous letter.
 - a. **Note:** There is no agreement on the organization or outline of First John.
 - b. I am following **Robert W. Yarbrough's** (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and *Baker Exegetical Commentary: 1-3 John*) 7-fold division
 - c. **The Central Truth** (of Christianity)
 - d. i.e., God is Light (1:1-2:6)

I. THE APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY OF FIRST JOHN (1 John 1:1-4)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:1-4)

1. No epistle in all of the New Testament begins with such a marvelous, in-depth and explicit statement of the apostles' authority in writing the New Testament and forming the Christian religion as does First John 1:1-4.
2. John says: "*You can believe what I write in this letter because I, along with all the other apostles, had first-hand, visible and tangible, and personal contact with Jesus Christ. I know Jesus face-to-face. And I write to you what Jesus told me...personally!*"
3. John's introduction establishes his apostolic **authority** to speak and write inspired Scripture.

- a. *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - b. A qualification for all the apostles
So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection. (Acts 1:21-22)
 - c. *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.* (Acts 2:32)
 - d. *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:8-12)

But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:19-20)
4. John mentions *four time-frames* involved in this apostolic *kerugma* (proclamation; message; witness)...
- a. First: He speaks with reference to *Eternity Past*
 - i. *“That which was from the beginning.”*
 - ii. *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.* (Genesis 1:1)
 - iii. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* (John 1:1-3)
 - iv. The beginning of creation and the beginning of God incarnate among mankind.
 - b. Second: He speaks with reference to his own life and the era of the apostles’ witness.
 - i. *Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you.* (1 John 1:1-3)
 - ii. In all of Scripture there is no more **marvelous** statement than this...
 - iii. *Which we have heard:* to listen to the words of a Nazarene and know you were hearing the voice of God
 - iv. *Which we have seen with our eyes:* to see God in a man, day in and day out, for over three years!

- v. *Which we looked upon* (beheld): Watched in action – all Christ’s miraculous miracles and supernatural acts
- vi. *And have touched with our hands*: He touched, hugged, kissed, held as dead, embraced as risen Lord
- vii. *Concerning the Word of Life*: The incarnate God revealed through and in Jesus of Nazareth

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known. (John 1:1, 14-18)

- viii. Here is the **most extensive** reference to the apostolic eyewitness of Christ and redemption in all of Scripture!
- c. Third: He writes with reference to the time of his writing of this letter.
- i. The age of the original readers of First John
 - ii. *... so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3)*
 - iii. Why? So that these early Christians may have fellowship with God, Jesus Christ, and the apostles.
 - iv. i.e., fellowship (*koinonia*) of the redeemed in the church
 - v. fellowship with God/Christ = salvation
- d. Fourth: John has an eye on you and me – those who will, through time, read His “writings”
- i. *And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:4)*
 - ii. Whoever reads (and believes) First John over the ages.
5. John’s epistle is written with the same purpose that his Gospel was written: *That people might believe God, trust in Christ and be saved.*
- a. *...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:3-4)*
 - b. *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)*
 - c. *This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. (John 21:24)*

6. The **result** of believing in Jesus Christ and having fellowship with God? “...that our joy may be complete”
7. There’s our theme again: *The Joy of the Christian Life (religion)*

II. THE APOSTOLIC MESSAGE OF FIRST JOHN (1 John 1:5-10)

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:5-10)

1. John is clear: *This is the message* of his epistle
 - a. *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* (1 John 1:5)
 - b. *The message: “**God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**”*
 - c. This is **the thesis** of this epistle.
2. **Marianne Meye Thompson:** *1-3 John: IVP; pp. 40-41.*

In many ways the statement that God is light is the thesis of the epistle. It includes a definition of God’s character as well as implications for the life of Christian discipleship. In fact, to lay bare the relationship between the character of God as light and Christian life as “walking in the light” is the whole point of the first part of the epistle.
3. **Colin G. Kruse:** *Letters of John: Pillar NTC; p. 62.*

He defines the content of this message as God is light. His message is essentially one about the character of God. The author does not intend to define what God is in Himself, but to provide a basis for ethical application. If God is light, those who truly know God will walk ‘in the light’ (1:7).
4. For John to describe God as *light* is not surprising.
 - a. This is the Old Testament picture of God – clothed in and hidden by blazing light.
 - i. A flaming fire in a burning bush (Exodus 3:1-6)
 - ii. A pillar of fire, smoke, flashing light

And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people. (Exodus 13:21-22)
 - iii. *Bless the LORD, O my soul!*
O LORD my God, you are very great!

*You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
 covering yourself with light as with a garment,
 stretching out the heavens like a tent.
 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters;
 he makes the clouds his chariot;
 he rides on the wings of the wind;
 he makes his messengers winds,
 his ministers a flaming fire.* (Psalm 104:1-4)

- iv. ... *he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.* (1 Tim. 6:15-16)
 - v. David called God “*my light and my salvation*” (Psalm 27:1)
 - vi. Isaiah talked about the *light of the nations* that would shine on the peoples of the world
- b. Jesus referred to Himself as “*The Light of the World*”
- “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* (John 8:12)
- “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.* (John 12:44-46)
- c. John calls Jesus both *the light of life* and *the light which enlightens all men*.
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.* (John 1:1-9)
- d. James, the brother of Jesus, sees God the same way: *light*
- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.* (James 1:17)
5. For the Biblical writers, and especially John, *light* represents God in five ways:
- a. First: Light points to God’s purity, glory and holiness.
- ...who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.* (1 Timothy 6:16)
- b. Second: Light points to God’s self-revelation; He enlightens men as to who He really is; esp. in Christ.
 - c. Third: God’s Word is a light to mankind.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*

*The unfolding of your words gives light;
it imparts understanding to the simple.* (Psalm 119:105, 130)

- d. Fourth: Light is a picture of God's salvation.

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.* (Isaiah 9:1-2)

- e. Fifth: The light of God is His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

*Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.
And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.* (Isaiah 60:1-3)

6. "Darkness", therefore, is five-fold: ignorance about God, rejection of His Word, life without Christ, lostness in sin and a life of spiritual and moral corruption—

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— (Ephesians 4:17-20)

7. John's argument that God is light in whom there is not an inkling of darkness, implies that believers are children of light.

- a. God is light so the children of God are children of light.
- b. *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,*

*“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”* (Ephesians 5:6-14)

- c. *So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”* When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. (John 12:35-36)
8. The apostle sets forth this truth in a series of **five** conditional statements (“If...”)
- a. If we do not live like Christ, we are in darkness.
 - i. *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* (1 John 1:6)
 - ii. *We lie:* we deceive ourselves and others
 - iii. *Do not practice the truth:* This truth is the light of God’s Word
 - b. If we walk in God’s light, we are truly saved.
 - i. *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.* (1 John 1:7)
 - ii. *Fellowship:* sharing in God’s life
 - iii. *Forgiveness:* cleansed by Christ’s blood
 - c. If we say we are not sinners who need forgiveness, then we are deluded and damned.
If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)
 - d. If we admit our sins, we will be forgiven and cleansed.
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)
 - e. If we think we have not sinned to the point of needing redemption, then we call God a liar and His Word is not in our souls.
If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:10)
9. The *children of light* (believers/Christians) acknowledge that...
- a. Darkness (sin) is in them which needs both cleansing and forgiveness
 - b. They have responded to the light of Jesus Christ, received Him and believed in Him, and are thus saved.
 - c. They should walk in the light (live holy lives) as both evidence and assurance of their salvation.
10. **Here’s a truth Christians are not afraid to face:** Darkness is both in each person around us all, all the time, and only the light of Jesus Christ can vanquish that darkness and free us to live as the “children of light.” This was **Jesus’ message of light!**
- a. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,*

but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (John 3:16-21)

- b. *I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.* (John 12:46)

11. *Sons of light...children of light...believers... Christians...children of God!*

12. Therefore, we are not afraid to bring our darkness (sin) to God...

III. THE APOSTOLIC MISSION OF FIRST JOHN (1 John 2:1-6)

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:1-6)

1. “*My little children*” = children of God = children of light...
2. John tells us the **purpose** of his first epistle.
 - a. *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.* (1 John 2:1-2)
 - b. A **three-fold purpose**, as in all His writings
 - c. First: so that we believers may not sin but lead a holy life
 - d. Second: to encourage those who do sin to go to Jesus Christ for saving help
 - i. *An advocate with the Father*
 - ii. Greek: *paraclete*: helper, encourager, an advocate, an intercessor, a mediator
 - iii. The language of a courtroom
 - iv. **Our defending attorney, pleading our case before the Divine Judge who is His Father!**
 - e. Third: Jesus can become this advocate for every single person in the world, because He died for all our sins.

- i. *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.* (1 John 2:2)
 - ii. *Propitiation:* satisfaction of God’s justice and His judgment on sin
 - iii. *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.* (Romans 3:21-25)
 - iv. *“the propitiation”:* to satisfy God
 - v. *“the expiation”:* to cover and cleanse people
 - f. **Note:** Christ is the propitiation for *our sins* = the elect who are already trusting in Christ, but also for *the sins of the whole world*, i.e., the elect around the world and throughout history who will believe in Christ.
3. “The World” (*kosmos*) in John’s writings is the human race in rebellion against God, His Son and the Kingdom of God.
- a. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* (John 3:16)
 - b. *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29)
 - c. God loved this world, sent Jesus into it, to die for all who would believe in Him, and pay for their sins.
 - d. This is **not** an offer of universal salvation for all, but for all who believe in Christ.
4. **David Jackman:** *Message of John’s Letters: BST; p. 46.*
- The glory of the Gospel is that we have an advocate who pleads for mercy on the ground of his own righteous action when he died the death that we deserve to die. Once the penalty has been paid, there cannot be any further demand for the sinner to be punished. God has Himself met our debt. He came in person to do so. The cross is not the Father punishing an innocent third party, the Son, for our sins. It is God taking to Himself, in the person of the Son, all the punishment that His wrath justly demands, quenching its sword, satisfying its penalty and thus atoning for our sins. And not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. The fact that John distinguished here between ‘us’ (the church) and the world means that he is using the world in his most characteristic way, to indicate those who are at present outside of Christ. At other times John uses the word (Greek, *kosmos*) to mean the earth, or the human race, but most frequently it carries the connotation of the world in rebellion, the mass of unbelievers, who reject Christ’s claims. This is the world for which Christ died. Every Christian was once a part of it. The propitiation that has availed to wipe out their sins is sufficient to do the same for all...*
5. There is *great significance* to both knowing and believing this Gospel about Jesus Christ.

- a. *And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.* (1 John 2:3-6)
- b. **Four** results of salvation in Christ (the Gospel)
- c. **First:** We will keep His commandments
- i. *And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.* (1 John 2:3)
 - ii. Why? Because we love Jesus and God!

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)

Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (John 14:23)

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:10-11)
 - iii. We obey God not because we *have to* out of fear...
 - iv. ...*but* because we *want to* out of love, as His “children of light.”
- d. **Second:** Disobedience to God’s law is proof that we really are not saved, not followers of Christ, not children of God.
- i. *Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* (1 John 2:4)
 - ii. *Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.* (John 14:24)
 - iii. **Assurance of salvation is ultimately rooted in holiness.**
- e. **Third:** By keeping God’s Word = obeying His commandments, we grow in our *love* for God and other men.
- i. ...*but* *whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him.* (1 John 2:5)
 - ii. **John Calvin’s** third use of the law: To teach us how to follow God’s will, love God, and love our neighbor.
- f. **Fourth:** If we abide in Jesus, we will walk in the way of light in which Jesus walked.
- i. ...*whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.* (1 John 2:6)

- ii. Salvation will make us *Christlike*.
- iii. And this will make “**our joy complete**” (1:4).

CONCLUSION: Never was First John so needed, since 98 AD, as it is in 2015!

1. We have a generation of *millennials* who doubt the inspiration, infallibility and authority of God’s Word: *homosexuality and fornication, same-sex marriage, creation, complementarian roles of men and women, and the validity of the Ten Commandments, etc.* But John writes with apostolic authority:

...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3)
2. We have a *Generation X* who want grace but no law. Who deny that Jesus died to “make people better.” But that is what John says: *No cheap grace, antinomianism, a Gospel that’s only half true:*

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:3-6)
3. We have a generation of *Baby Boomers* and *Baby Busters* who’ve lost their perspective on life, because they’ve forgotten their salvation and drifted back into a worldly frame of mind: *retirement, career fulfillment, loss of spiritual zeal, burden for aging parents, sorrows of getting older.* We’ve forgotten how to be “*children of light*”!

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7)
4. We possess a Christian faith that has lost its **joy!** We are an angry, censorious, shrill, over-reactionary, demanding, entitled, aggressive, pugnacious, frightened and desperate people – losing the American Dream and without something to replace it! John has an idea!

And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:4)
5. Here is where we start all over: *God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*
 - a. *God is light:* holy and pure, self-revealing, giving us His Word, granting us salvation, sending us His Son!
 - b. *Jesus is the light of the world:* God to be seen by all!
 - c. *Christians are the children of light* – Sons of God, followers of Christ, temples of the Holy Spirit Spirit.
6. ...and what makes God infinitely and perfectly happy – *His Own Light* – can give us our joy again!
7. *Come to the light again,* and you will find the joy of God once more!

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. (Ephesians 5:14)

