

The Epistles of John

A Bible Study on the Books of 1, 2, and 3 John
by Pastors Mark K. Schoen and William A. Boateng
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Spring - 2025

Introduction: Ever since the first century, Christians have had to learn what it means to live out the “real love” of the Christian faith. “How do we do it?” The General Epistles of John, written into the late first century, sometime around 100 AD, were meant for this reason. John “tells it as it is.” For Christians, there are things that are “hard to hear,” in these letters, and yet, most of the contents are “so soothing” to hear, because they are filled with God’s love for us in Christ, “*our eternal Advocate*” before God the Father!

A. The Author

1. The apostle John, one of the beloved disciples.
In the original Greek: *ἰωαννης*. What does the name mean?
2. What do you know about another famous John of the New Testament?
3. What do we know about this John? (See Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:17 and Luke 9:54; John 19:26-27 and John 21:20, 24; Acts 4:12-20; and Rev. 1:4.)
4. “*The elder*.” Why do you think John describes himself the way he does?
5. What happened to him?

B. The Original Audience

1. These were known as “general epistles” addressed to a general Christian audience.
2. The original hearers were living in Ephesus and other territories.
3. He calls them: “*Little children*.” Again, why?
4. It was assumed that these early Christians knew him well... the aged apostle, the grandfather of the little, younger Christians!

C. The Purpose(s) of these Epistles:

1. 1 John 1:4 and 2:1 and 5:13; and 2 and 3 John... “Don’t compromise the truth!”
2. What did John urge them to do? Read a key verse: 1 John 4:7-8
3. Care about the LOVE... from God first and then toward others!!
4. *Gnosticism* and *Cerinthianism* are big problems, and a main primary reason for writing the first epistle.
5. We believers better learn the meanings of: *life, light, love, sin, world*, and so forth.
6. To sum it up: How do we to live out the life God has given us by His love?

D. The Key Chapters and Verses:

1. 1 John 1:1-4
2. 1 John 3:1-3
3. 2 John 5-6
4. 3 John 4

