



Walking Thru The Bible

1st JOHN

Introduction

Author: One of the unique features of the first epistle is that it does not name either the author or the recipients. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the only other book similar in this respect.

From the beginning it has been recognized as a letter from the Apostle John circulated to the churches around Ephesus (Asia Minor).

The Apostle John worked with the church in Jerusalem until about A.D. 70. After the destruction of Jerusalem he made his residence at Ephesus. He lived to a great age and here wrote the fourth Gospel, his three epistles and the Book of Revelation.

Much information about John and testimony to his work and authorship has come down to us through three of his pupils, Polycarp, Papias, and Ignatius, who became leaders in the churches at Smyrna, Hierapolis, and Antioch.

External Evidence: The external evidence for the Apostle John's authorship is very great. Only much later did someone try to suggest that the "elder John" was a John different from the Apostle. The term "elder" however was used by 2nd and 3rd generation Christians to refer to their predecessors, "the men of early days". It was natural then for John, the last of the apostles, to refer to himself as one of "the elder men" (Cf. EGT, V, p.160).

Internal Evidence: The similarity of the 4th Gospel and these three epistles is overwhelming. Identical authorship is obvious from contents, attitude, vocabulary, identical expression style.

Date and Place of Writing: As Ephesus was the Apostle's chief abode during the later years of his life, we may assume that they were written from there. Certainly they were written late in John's life. The tone of them is that of an old man writing to a younger generation. The internal relation of the three epistles strongly favor their time-order as we have them, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. We may date them about A.D. 80-95.

Recipients: The first epistle might rightly be called a "general" or "catholic" epistle. It is not addressed to any specific church but it appears messengers took duplicate copies to area churches (See 2 John and 3 John).

Content: Each of John's epistles have introductory material and a conclusion, but apart from that it is difficult to make a satisfactory analyzed outline.

Purpose: John says he writes that the joy of his people be full (1:4) and that they may not sin.

Problem: Some false teachers were attempting to lead some away from the truth. John in a polite way does not name them but he leaves no doubt about whom he is speaking. His language and arguments are directed to refute their heresy.

One term used to describe this radical philosophy was Docetism. It is from the Greek word that means to seem, and the Docetists taught that Jesus only "seemed" to have a body. They insisted that he was only a phantom and never had flesh and blood, physical, human body; that he was a purely spiritual being who only appeared to have a body.

Another term used to describe a philosophy adopted and adapted by some false-Christian teachers was Gnosticism. This Gnosticism led to about three different attitudes:

1. Since it regarded the body as evil, it sometimes took the form of asceticism with fasting, celibacy, rigid control and evil deliberate ill treatment of the body.
2. Or--it might take the form that the body did not matter, therefore its appetites and lusts might be gratified without control and without limit.
3. The Gnostic regarded himself as an altogether spiritual man; he was above all the material things of life, so completely did they consider themselves above sins that sin, for them, had ceased to exist. To them John speaks of deceiving themselves, 1:8-10.

A personal enemy of John at Ephesus was a man named Cerinthus. It might help us by seeing by Irenaeus says of him.

"Cerinthus, again, a man who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians,...represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he nevertheless was more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Moreover, after his baptism, Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and that then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible / unsuffering / inasmuch as he was a spiritual being."

Against Heresies, I, 26:1-2.

WHY THESE THINGS ARE WRITTEN

Introduction:

1. John sets forth his purpose in writing First John, and deepens our faith in God's Word.
2. The idea "I write" or "I have written" appears 9 times.
1. **John Wrote To Give God's Saints A Basis for Joy - 1 John 1:4**
 - A. Men desire happiness. 1 Peter 3:10.
 - B. Greatest happiness comes from obedience to God's Word.
 - C. We can rejoice in forgiveness of sins.
- II. **John Wrote To Urge People To Live Pure Lives - 1 John 2:1-2**
 - A. Jesus died for our sins. 1 John 1:2
 - B. Jesus' blood keeps on cleansing saints from sins - 1 John 1:7
 - C. John would motivate people to live pure lives.
- III. **John Wrote So Men Might Have the Right Relationships - 1 John 2:13-14**
 - A. Men need to know the Lord.
 - B. Men need to have right relationship with the devil.
 - C. Men need the proper relation to God's Word.
 - D. Brethren need to have the right relationship with each other - 1 John 2:8-11, 3:11
- IV. **John Wrote That God's People Might Have Access to the Truth-- 1 John 2:21**
 - A. The Truth shall make you free - John 8:32; 1 Tim. 2:4
 - B. False teachers trying to seduce God's people - 1 John 2:26
- V. **John Wrote That God's Children Might Know That They Have Eternal Life - 1 John 5:13**
 - A. Men need this kind of assurance. "Blessed Assurance" #477.
 - B. This assurance must be built upon God's revealed and written word. 1 John 5:13.

CONCLUSION

WHY BRETHREN "GO OUT" FROM US

1 John 2:19

Introduction

1. It is possible for some to "go out" from us. 1 John 2:19
2. This danger is seen in the lives of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:19-20) and Demas (2 Tim. 4:10).
- I. **Some "Go Out" Because of Temptation -- Luke 8:13**
 - A. Temptation means generally, a testing or trial, but it also means "solicitation to sin." James 1:12-16.
 - B. "Testing" may come from "friends" (1 Pet. 4:3) or lusts of the flesh, eyes, or pride of life. 1 John 2:15.
- II. **Some "Go Out" Because Of:**
 - A. "Cares of this life" -- Luke 8:14
 - B. Not "seeking the Kingdom first" -- Matthew 6:33
 - C. "Pleasures of this life" -- Luke 8:14b
- III. **Some "Go Out" Because of False Doctrine**
 - A. John warned the brethren - 1 John 4:1; 2:26
 - B. Jesus warned His disciples of false teachers - Matt. 7:15
 - C. Paul described people "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine" -- Eph. 4:14
 - D. The Galatian Christians had been deceived by a "perverted gospel" -- Gal. 1:6-9.
 - E. Today brethren are led astray by the false doctrines that:
 1. "The Church of Christ is just a denomination among denominations." -- Eph. 4:4.
 2. "Morals are relative and ultimately determined by the situation." -- Gal. 5:19-21.
 3. "Truth is subjective, and is obtained through dialogue, and through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit." -- John 8:32; Jude 1:3

Conclusion:

1. These are some reasons brethren become unfaithful.
2. Those who "go out" are in the grips of spiritual death -- 1 John 5:16
 - a. A sin unto death is any sin a brother will not confess and repent -- 1 John 5:16; 1 John 1:6-9.
 - b. Those who "go out" can return -- James 5:19-20.
3. One thing more tragic than "going out" from the Lord is dying in that condition.
4. And it is just as tragic to never come "into" the Lord in the first place -- Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-5.