

Intro:

I. Introduction to the Epistle of 1 John

A. Intro and Importance of the Epistle

1. Like today, religiously, other than the Judeo-Christian realm, John's world was very open to new religions
2. Asia Minor was a melting pot of ideas, philosophies, and religions
3. Emperor worship was still in vogue, but the worship of a variety of Greek gods was also practiced
4. many of these different philosophies were finding entrances into the Church through false teachers and external pressure
5. only two of the seven Churches in Rev 2-3, did not receive rebuke from Christ

B. Author

1. Hebrews and 1 John are the only two letters that don't identify their author
 - a. from the 1st century until the 18th century,
 - i. (the beginning of higher criticism)
 - ii. John was considered the author
 - iii. Like the Gospel of John, he doesn't refer to himself
 - b. Internal evidence strongly support John as writer
 - i. presents series of stark contrasts w/ no third option
 - light and darkness
 - life and death
 - love and hate
 - truth and lies
 - love of the Father and love of the world
 - knowing God and not knowing Him
 - ii. Grammatical styles are similar
 - use of many words and phrases found nowhere else in the NT
 - more similarities than Luke and Acts
 - iii. Theological themes that pervade both
 - the incarnation of the eternal unique Son of God
 - that Jesus Christ is the source of eternal life and is eternal life
 - that believers were once the children of the devil, part of his evil world system, walking in darkness, spiritually blind and dead,
 - b/c of His love for us, God sent His Son to lay down His life for us to take away our sins so that we might be born again and receive eternal life
2. The author claims to be an eyewitness to the events of Christ's life in comparison to the 2nd generation believers to whom He was writing
3. Since the author also wrote the Gospel of John, 5 evidences indicate that it was John
 - a. familiarity with Jewish customs and beliefs indicates that the author is Jewish
 - b. detailed knowledge of Palestine indicates that He lived there
 - c. numerous details only an eyewitness could have known indicates that He saw what he wrote about
 - d. the author was an apostle, intimately acquainted with what the 12 were thinking and feeling
 - e. no one else would have written John without mentioning him in their narrative

4. John

- a. the youngest son of Zebedee
 - i. a successful fisherman on the lake of Galilee
 - ii. James being the older brother, always listed first
 - iii. Salome was his mother and she gave to support Jesus' ministry - Mk 15:40; Mt 27:56
 - iv. Salome may have been Mary's sister (Jo 19:25) making Jesus and John cousins
- b. was a disciple of John the Baptizer - Jo 1:35-40
 - i. when the Baptizer points out Jesus, John leaves and follows Jesus - 1:37
 - ii. After staying w Jesus for a while, he returned to his father's fishing business only to be called to follow Christ later - Mt 4:18-22 and be named an apostle - Mt 10:2
- c. Despite being known as the Apostle of Love, he had a fiery disposition
 - i. named with his brother "sons of thunder" - Mk 3:17
 - ii. Wanted to call fire down from heaven on people who didn't receive Jesus - Lk 9:54

C. Date and Place

1. no clear historical indicators
 - a. probably 2nd half of 1st century
 - b. repeated use of phrase "little children" - 2:1,12,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21 indicates
 - i. that John is much older
 - ii. That he wrote near the end of his life
2. testimony of early church fathers places him at Ephesus at that time
3. no mention of the persecution under Emperor Domitian - 95 AD
4. Probably written after the Gospel of John - 80% of 1 Jo reflect concepts taught in the Gospel

D. Occasion and Purpose

1. the infection of heresy
 - a. the roots of a 2nd century Gnosticism
 - b. from the Greek word "gnosis" to know
 - c. taught that matter was inherently evil, spirit was good
2. philosophical dualism lead to false teachers accepting Christ's deity, but deny His humanity
3. led to one of two forms of heresy
 - a. some known as Docetists - from the Greek "dokeo" to seem or appear
 - i. they insisted that Jesus' body appeared to be real but wasn't
 - ii. John forcefully assert that
 - he heard, seen, and touched Christ in 1:1-4
 - Christ had come in the flesh - 4:2
 - b. the others
 - i. taught that Christ's spirit came upon Jesus at the baptism and left before the cross
 - ii. John refuted this by say that the one baptized was the same one as the one crucified - 5:6
4. The Gnostics also concluded that since the body was evil and a prison for the spirit,
 - a. they were indifferent to moral values and ethical behavior
 - b. they believed that sin done in the body had no connection or affect on the spirit
 - c. they viewed themselves as spiritual elites
 - i. they had true spiritual knowledge
 - i. they scorned the unenlightened