

## INDEX OF I JOHN

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**Message #1****Various Texts**

There is no opening, no greeting or salutation. There is no formal conclusion and there is no formal name that shows up in this book except that of Jesus Christ. There are no personal, geographical or even historical mentions concerning the writer or the readers. In fact, some have even thought this book is so unusual that it must have been a sermon that was written either before or after its delivery and not a letter. But this book is as powerful a book that anyone will ever study and if the instruction contained in it is accurately understood and followed, it is possible for every man and woman to have exactly the kind of fellowship with God that God desires to have with us. This book is I John.

**QUESTION #1** – Why study I John?

**Reason #1** - Because I John is a book in the Bible and the Bible is the only book that is God's Word!

During the first 400 years after Christ left this earth, there were certain major listings of books that belonged in the Bible which occurred at various times in history. These listings were called “canons.” There was the Muratorian Canon of A.D. 170; the Apostolic Canon of A.D. 300; the Cheltenham Canon of A.D. 360; and the Athanasius Canon of A.D. 367. I John shows up in every one of these canons as a book of the Bible. Furthermore, there were major gatherings called councils that determined which books really belonged in Scripture. There was the Council of Nicea, which met from A.D. 325-40; the Council of Hippo, which met in A.D. 393; the Council of Carthage, which met in A.D. 397 and again in A.D. 419. All of these councils named I John as being an authentic book of the Bible. Also, there were some very early translations made of the N.T. books from one language to another. An old Latin translation was made in A.D. 200 and an old Syriac translation was made in A.D. 400, and both of these have I John in them.

Manuscript preservation also confirms that I John is one of God's rare books. In fragments of manuscripts which show up on papyrus paper, I John is part of manuscripts known as p23 (which manuscript is located in Urbana, Illinois), and p72 (which manuscript is located in Geneva, Switzerland), which come from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the Uncial manuscripts, Greek manuscripts written with all capital letters, I John shows up in 17 key manuscripts from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the Miniscule manuscripts, Greek manuscripts written in small letter cursive style, I John shows up in 24 key manuscripts from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the Lectionaries, early church service books which contain selected scriptural texts, I John appears in some 19.

**Reason #2** - Because I John is a book that claims it can take us into such deep fellowship with God that it is the equivalent of the same fellowship with God that the apostles had. I John 1:3

**Reason #3** - Because I John is a book that is clearly needed in this part of the country.

It condemns false religion by stating that if one does not have a true perspective of the Son, one does not have any relationship with the Father (I John 2:23). The perspective that I John demands one have concerning Jesus Christ is that He is the Word, He is the Life, and He is God.

**Reason #4** - Because I John is a book that will prompt a believer not to sin. I John 2:1

I John is a book that realizes believers do sin, but it is also a book that promotes a mindset that challenges the believer not to sin.

**Reason #5** - Because I John is a book that promotes that God's people be stable in the truth.  
I John 2:21

**Reason #6** - Because I John is a book that not only promotes the doctrine of eternal security, but it is written so that God's people may know they actually have eternal life.  
I John 5:13

**QUESTION #2** – Who wrote I John?

**Evidence #1** - The Logical evidence.

Even though the author does not specifically identify himself by name, it is very evident that his identity was so well-known that he could refer to his readers as his “children” and they would know who it was that was addressing them (i.e. 2:1, 18, 28; 3:7).

A second point is the Greek title of the book, which literally reads in Greek “of John A,” which we call in English “I John.” The titles of this book seem to come from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The manuscript called “B” (presently kept in the Vatican in Rome) which comes from the 4<sup>th</sup> century reads “of John A.” The manuscript called “A” (presently kept in London) which comes from the 5<sup>th</sup> century, also reads “of John A.” Now here is the point: some person named “John” wrote this book and when one sees “I John” or “John A,” one must know who it is.

**Evidence #2** - The Internal evidence.

B. F. Westcott, who wrote a tremendous commentary on I John in 1883, said, “The writing is so closely connected with the fourth Gospel in vocabulary, style, thought, scope that these two books cannot but be regarded as works of the same author” (Westcott, p. 30).

**Evidence #3** - The External evidence.

The unanimous consensus of all early church fathers and writers is that I John was written by the Apostle John. In fact, D. Edmond Hiebert writes: “...all Fathers, Greek and Latin, accept I John as being by John” (Vol. 3, p. 184).

Eusebius, the famed church historian, claims that all scholars of his day and much earlier than him (A.D. 300) unquestionably accepted I John as being written by the Apostle John. Furthermore, Eusebius says that after the acceptance of epistles written by Paul, the next N.T. book to be recognized was I John written by John (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, p. 134).

**QUESTION #3** – When was I John written?

**Observation #1** - I John was written at a time when John was older.

His many allusions to believers being “little children” indicates John is writing in the twilight of his years.

**Observation #2** - I John was written at a time when John called the “last hour.” I John 2:18

Although last hour may certainly mean “last dispensation,” we may assume from this that John himself has seen many years of life and was writing at an older age. In fact, enough time had elapsed for some who learned instruction to depart from that instruction (I John 2:19).

**Observation #3** - I John was written at the time of a particular heresy. I John 4:3

The particular heresy which John alludes to in I John 4:3, was heavily promoted by a man whose name was Cerinthus, who was very vocal near the end of the first century. Irenaeus (A.D. 140-203), who himself wrote a major volume against Gnosticism, claims that John wrote I John to remove the error taught by Cerinthus (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 111.11.1)

Clement, the famed historian claims John was set free from Patmos by the Romans, went to Ephesus, and wrote I John (Mitchell, p. 11).

**QUESTION #4** – To whom was I John written?

- 1) I John is written to believers. I John 1:3; 2:20, 27; 3:13
- 2) I John is written to believers of all spiritual levels. I John 2:13
- 3) I John is written to believers who had been instructed doctrinally. I John 2:7, 21, 24; 3:11
- 4) I John is written to believers who could fall into idolatry. I John 5:21

Our conclusion is that John wrote I John to believers in general. It is a book for all believers of all spiritual levels. It is a book every church needs.

**QUESTION #5** – Why did John write I John?

- 1) The apostolic teaching and instruction was under attack. I John 1:1-3
- 2) Some were leaving the church and turning against its doctrine. I John 2:19
- 3) The true believers found that they were hated by the world. I John 3:13

- 4) Some of the believers were toying with the idea of turning from the church and pursuing things in the world. I John 2:15-17
- 5) Everyone was saying they were right with God and trying to get these believers to accept it. I John 4:1

**I John is a book written to believers so that they might know they are right with God, and at the same time know others aren't right with God. I John is a book that was written to instruct believers that they can have wonderful fellowship with God in the midst of an evil world which is filled with evil doctrine.**

This is a great book for the Church. Get ready to go. Get ready to grow. Get ready to glow. Get ready for I John.