

Key to I JOHN

1. BACKGROUND:

Writer is John, the beloved Disciple, brother of James, son of Zebedee, a fisherman turned "**fisher of men**." Written from Ephesus. John is also writer of the Gospel which bears his name, two other brief letters, and the closing book of the Bible, Revelation.

The date is late, about A.D. 95, near the close of John's eventful life, and some 60 years after the resurrection of CHRIST. This letter, along with John's other writing, was composed some 30 years after the other N.T. books.

Occasion: John's Gospel had been written to show that JESUS CHRIST is the Son of GOD, and that by believing in Him, one might have life (John 20:30, 31). This letter, addressed evidently to Christians everywhere, emphasizes the assurance of those who already have been saved (5:13). Key words are "**know**" and "**fellowship**."

2. THEME:

This is a family letter from the Heavenly Father to His little children or His "born ones." The world is seen as without. GOD is here concerned about the behavior of His children. The moral government of the universe is not in question. Here the family is important. While the Gospel by John leads us across the threshold of the Father's house, the letters of John make us at home there. Paul, as he writes, is concerned about our public position as sons; John, with our nearness to the Father. Next to the Song of Solomon, this is the most intimate of the writings of the Bible.

3. MAIN DIVISIONS:

The family with the Father (1:1-3:24);
The family and the world (4:1-5:21).

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

This book is strongly characterized by the positiveness of the writer. John writes as one who had heard, seen, and handled the Son of GOD. The word "**know**" and kindred terms are used 40 times. There was great need in the church for this Epistle. Heresies were creeping in which denied the verities of the faith.

There were the Ebionites who taught that CHRIST was a mere man. The Corinthians taught that CHRIST was an emanation of GOD that descended on the man Jesus and left Him before the crucifixion. The Docetists held that CHRIST had no real body, and hence only appeared to suffer.

John was always a writer in love. But here he is very blunt as he unquestioningly and uncompromisingly points out false teachings and false teachers. He declares such is spirit of antichrist.

According to tradition, John cared for JESUS' mother till her death. After the destruction of Jerusalem, John made his home in Ephesus. Among his "pupils" were such worthies as Polycarp, Papias, Ignatius.

5. OUTLINE:

Introduction (1:1-4)
Light (1:5-2:29)
Perception
Person and Purpose
Perils
Permanence
Love (3; 4)
Sons
Seducers
Brothers
Life (5)
Witnesses
Confidence

6. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

Written to children, i.e., GOD's children, or Christians, only.

Prominent keys "**Light**," "**Life**," "**Love**."

Very important verse is 1:9 where Christians are told what to do in case of sin.

Chapter 4 uses the word "**love**" more than any other in the Bible. GOD is declared (4:8) to be love, but the true manifestation of that love is shown in verse 9.

7. KEY:

Just remember that I John is from the Father to His children only.

~ end of I John ~

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