

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN – OUTLINE OF TEACHING

John, the author of these Epistles also wrote the Gospel that bears his name as well as the Book of Revelation, which Jesus gave him to impart to the Church. He was one of the original twelve Disciples chosen by Christ – brother of James, and son of Zebedee (CP Mt 10:2). See also author's comments on Mt 10:1-4 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. John's purpose for writing his first Epistle was to verify the facts concerning the person of Jesus, and warn Christians against false teachers rising up from their midst. He also reproves Christians for their lack of love for one another.

(CP 1Jn 1:1-10). In V1-4 here John positively attests to the reality of the Person of Christ from firsthand knowledge. He had been personally involved with Him in His earthly Ministry, and had seen and heard and touched Him. He could give a personal account of all that Jesus said and did. V5-10 teach that there are no sins Christians commit that God will not forgive if they are confessed. Confessing the sins and God's forgiveness of them, is contemporaneous. See author's comments on 1Jn 1:1-4, 1:9 and 1:10, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

(CP 1Jn 2:1-29). The clear teaching of Scripture is that it is folly for Christians who habitually sin to think they are saved simply because they believe in Christ for their Salvation. There is more to it than that as V1-6 here plainly teach (CP V1-6 with 1Jn 1:6-10). Only strict compliance with God's Word as laid down in Scripture by Jesus will ensure one's Salvation. God's love accomplishes its perfect work only in those who obey His Commandments. The *Old Commandment* John refers to in V7 is that God's children love one another. Loving one another is not an optional extra for them, but a command that has to be obeyed (CP V7 with Jn 13:34-35 and 15:12-17). The *New Commandment* John refers to in V8 in 1Jn 2, is still the Old Commandment that Christians are to love one another, but Jesus added a new dimension to it in His sacrificial death on the cross, which is what Jn 15:12-17 teaches (CP 1Jn 2:8). In V9-11 love is characterised by light and hate by darkness, which signifies Hell and eternal damnation. Anyone who says they love God and does not express that love by their self-sacrificial love for other Christians are only deluding themselves thinking they are saved (CP V9-11 with 1Jn 3:10-19, 23-24). The plain teaching of Scripture, which Christians must recognise, is that just not liking other Christians means they are walking in darkness and in danger of forfeiting their Salvation. This gives lie to the statement by many Christians that they love someone, but do not like them. How can that be honestly true? As far as God is concerned, we either love or hate them – there is no in-between. Jesus Himself taught that there is no neutrality in Christianity (CP Mt 12:30).

In V15-17 in 1Jn 2, John warns Christians against loving the world and worldly things. Christians cannot love the world and worldly things, and say they love God too. *The World* designates all that is alienated from and hostile to God. It applies not only

to material, but also to abstract things which have Spiritual and moral – or immoral – values (CP Jn 2:15-17 with Jas 4:4). The “lust of the flesh” in 1Jn 2:16 refers to the passionate cravings of the sin nature; the preoccupation with gratifying physical desires. Satan is the spiritual force behind the world system – he is referred to in Scripture as the *god of this world* (CP 2Cor 4:3-4). *Antichrists* in 1Jn 2:18-19 are false teachers in the Church who have departed Doctrinally from the teachings in Scripture concerning the Person of Christ (CP V18-23 with 1Jn 4:1-6 and 2Jn 7-11). No one can be saved who does not believe in the Deity of Jesus. John's declaration in 1Jn 2:27 concerning the Unction, or Anointing of the Holy Spirit of New Testament Christians is a reference to false teachers, not those Christ set in the Church (CP 1Jn 2:27-29 with Eph 4:11-16). See also author's comments on 1Jn 2:3-6, 2:7, 2:12-14, 2:15-17, 2:18-19, 2:22-23 and 2:27, and all related cross reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

(CP 1Jn 3:1-24). Everyone who receives Christ as their Saviour becomes a child of God (CP V1-3 with Jn 1:12-13 and Ga 3:26). The future event John alludes to in 1Jn 3:1-3 is the First Resurrection when the Living Church will be translated to Heaven by Jesus. 1Jn 3:4-9 teaches that truly committed Christians do not habitually sin. They do sin spontaneously though, but not habitually. The power of sin over their lives is broken when they surrender their lives to Christ. The New Birth issues a new sinless nature (CP V4-9 with Ro 6:1-23). In V10-13 in Ch 3, John characterises the Children of God by their righteousness and love for one another, and the children of the devil by their unrighteousness and hearts full of hate, murder and indifference. He then explains why the world hates Christian. Cain was the prototype of his hatred (CP 1Jn 3:10-13 with Gen 4:1-8 and He 11:4).

1Jn 3:14 teaches that it is only Christians' love for one another, manifested as commanded in Scripture, that assures their place in God's Eternal Kingdom. This is confirmed in V16-23. V16 is the exact counterpart to Jn 3:16 (CP 1Jn 3:14-23 with Jn 3:16). Christians who profess to love their brothers and sisters in Christ must not only express that love in words, but in deeds also, otherwise they are only deluding themselves thinking they are saved. 1Jn 3:16 also confirms the Deity of Jesus “...*hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His live for us*” (see also author's comments on 1Jn 3:2, 3:6-9, 3:10-13, 3:15, 3:16-18 and 3:19-22, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**).

(CP 1Jn 4:1-21). John admonishes Christians here in V1-6 to test the spirit behind every teaching in the light of Scripture. If the teaching is not in conformity with Scripture it must be rejected out of hand completely (CP V1-6 with 2Jn 7-11 and 1Th 5:21). In V7-21 in 1Jn 4, John traces the love Christians should manifest for one another to its source in the nature of God as revealed in Him giving His Son up to death to provide Salvation for His enemies. John stresses

Christians' love for one another as the test of their Christian life. It is only by the expression of their love for one another like God expressed His love for them, that God's love is made perfect in them. This is the "perfect love" that casteth out fear in V18. *Fear* in this context is the fear of being eternally damned (CP V7-21 with 1 Jn 2:10 and 3:14, 19-20). See also author's comments on 1Jn 4:1-6 and 4:7-21, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

(CP 1Jn 5:1-21). John teaches the Doctrine of Jesus Christ in this chapter. First, in V1-5 he presents proof of the New Birth for Believers in Christ – how and when it takes place. Then in V6-9 he names three witnesses to the Deity of Christ (CP V1-9; 1Jn 2:1-29; Jn 5:30-40). Next in 1Jn 5:10-13, John teaches that Christians can be saved and know it (CP V10-13 and Ro 8:1-17). In 1Jn 5:14-15, John teaches that Christians completely surrendered to the authority of God's Word will receive whatever they ask of Him in Prayer – there is nothing God will not do for them (CP V14-15 and Jn 15:7). This is the Infallible Word of God which is intended for Christians to believe in, and partake of the Blessings God promises them in Scripture. The "sin unto death" John refers to in 1Jn 5:16-17 is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (CP V16-17 with Mt 12:31). True Christians could never commit this sin. It can only be committed by someone who has wilfully spurned the Spirit of Grace like the Pharisees. Finally, in V18-21 in his first Epistle, John again teaches that truly Born Again Christians do not habitually sin. There is a distinct difference between

them and the Children of the Devil (CP V18-21 with 1Jn 3:1-10). See Also author's comments on 1Jn 5:6-9, 5:10-13, 5:14-15, and 5:16-17, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

That completes our study of John's First Epistle. Now let us examine his Second Epistle and see what we can learn from it (CP 2Jn 1-13). The subject matter here is the same as John's first Letter. In V1 though he refers to himself as the *elder* it is pointless speculating who the *elect lady* is. She is not named anywhere in Scripture. Some think she signifies a "sister Church" but that is pure speculation (CP V1 with Phm 9). The predominant teaching in John's Second Epistle is in V9-11 (CP V9-11). Here John warns Christians against sitting under false teachers or fraternising with them (CP V9-11 with 1Jn 2:22-26). See also author's comments on 2Jn 1:1-4 and 1:9-11, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

(CP 3Jn 1-14). See also author's comments on 3Jn 1:1, 1:2, 1:5-8 and 1:9-10, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his study *The New Testament Church – Its Essential Nature and Composition According to Scripture*, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**.