

## Introductory Information: Book of First John

**Author:** John the disciple / apostle (Luke 6:13-14)

John was the brother of James (who died in Acts 12:2 – not the author the book of James). John and James were the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 10:2-4). Jesus called them “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:13-17). Perhaps this title describes the strong, intense personalities that caused them to be outspoken and made them strong leaders (Luke 9:46-56). It is no wonder then, that Jesus combined them with Peter to create an inner-circle within the 12 apostles (Matthew 17:1-3; 26:36-38). As spokesmen and leaders, these men also attracted the enemies of the Gospel (Acts 12:1-3; Revelation 1:9).

John is the author of The Gospel of John; The General Epistles (Letters) of I, II, III, John; and Revelation.

**Date and place of writing:** It is thought that John wrote this letter in the latter part of his life (perhaps A.D. 90 – 95) after he wrote his Gospel (around A.D. 80 – 90). John was probably in Ephesus when he wrote this letter.

### Purpose / Main Theme of the Book:

- **To reveal the evidence of the new birth – the marks of a true Christian.**  
“These things have I written...*that you may know that you have eternal life...*” (I John 5:13); “And these things write we unto you, *that your joy may be full.*” (I John 1:4)
- **To reveal the nature of false teachers and their teaching.**  
“*These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*” (I John 2:26)  
“*...Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error.*” (I John 4:6)

**Key Verse:** I John 5:13

“*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may [continue to] believe in the name of the Son of God.*”

## A Short Outline of First John

I. **God is Light (I John 1:5-7)**

Therefore, we should walk in the light.

II. **God is Love (I John 4:7-8, 16)**

Therefore, we should dwell in God's love.

III. **God is Life (I John 5:11-12, 20)**

Therefore, we should receive eternal life from Him and live out that life through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Adapted from "Thru the Bible" with J. Vernon McGee, Volume 5, pg. 755, (Thomas Nelson Publishers).

## A More Detailed Outline of First John:

I. Introduction: Saving faith puts us in fellowship / partnership with God (The Father and His Son) through the testimony of the Apostles. (I John 1:1-4)

- The Word of Life was manifested / revealed.
- Eternal life was received / experienced.
- Eternal life is to be shared – the fellowship is joyfully growing.

II. We can have true fellowship because **"God is Light"** (I John 1:5 – 2:29)

- Obedience (I John 1:5 – 2:6)
- Love (I John 2:7-17)
- Truth (I John 2:18-29)

III. We can have true sonship because **"God is Love"** (I John 3:1 – 5:21)

- Obedience (I John 3:1-24)
- Love (I John 4:6-21)
- Truth (I John 4:1-6; 5:1-21)

This is a modification of Warren Wiersbe's outline in "The Bible Exposition Commentary" – New Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> volume, pg. 473, (Victor – Cook Communications Ministries).