

EFC

October 29, 2023

Big Story. Bigger God. – “Litmus Test”

1 John

Good morning, and welcome to English Fellowship Church. My name is Jeremy, and I’m one of the Pastors here. Thank you, Oscar, for leading us through the book of Jude last Sunday! We got a little out of order due to some changes to the schedule, so today I’m going back to 1 John, and next week we’ll be in 2 and 3 John. Which means we are almost done with our little survey of the New Testament, which brings us close to the conclusion of our chronological study through the Bible.

Background – written by the Apostle John, to believers (but not sure where); cyclical writing style that repeats themes throughout

Pray.

INTRO - Linchpin

- I. John’s purpose in writing: that believers in Christ may know they have eternal life so that they remain in fellowship with Jesus and one another.
 - a. 1 John 5:13 “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”
 - i. those who believe in the name of Jesus: those who trust that Jesus is who He claimed to be, and rest in His finished work on the cross
 - b. Also tells us in 1:3 that he writes so they may have fellowship together, and with God and Christ. Fellowship requires common faith in Jesus; remaining in that common faith is helped by assurance that keeps one from going elsewhere!
 - i. They already have the best there is, so there is no need to look elsewhere!
 - c. Note: John tells us that the issue of faithfulness to the true God and Savior Jesus Christ is very black and white, with starkly different results – light and dark, truth and lie, love and hate.
 - i. 1 John 2:23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.
 - ii. 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.
 - iii. Faithfulness to Jesus is the linchpin.
- II. What was causing them to doubt or wonder, so that they needed to be assured?
 - a. 1 John 2:18-19 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.
 - b. Apostates, those who had been a part of them, but have left the fellowship of true believers.
 - i. Seems that they claimed to have special “knowledge”
 1. 1 John 2:20-21 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.
 2. Clear Scriptures (the Apostles’ teachings) were not enough

3. Could cause a believer to worry: “Oh, why haven’t I received a ‘word from the Lord?’” “Oh, maybe they’re right; maybe I need more than what I’ve already got here in God’s Word to be a ‘real’ Christian.”
 - ii. Denied that Jesus is the Christ
 1. 1 John 2:22-23 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.
 - iii. Probably friends, probably even looked up to some of them, trusted them.
- III. So, John writes to assure the believers who have remained faithful and been “left behind” because of it, so that they might know that they have eternal life and don’t need to worry or look elsewhere; and in knowing, that they might remain in true fellowship with Jesus and one another.
- IV. John gives evidences throughout the book that can help give assurance to the Christians that they do indeed have eternal life, thus establishing them in the faith and keeping them in fellowship with John.
- a. These are litmus tests, and are meant to give assurance to true believers; so these offer an opportunity to examine our lives in the light of God’s piercing truth.
 - i. Litmus Paper
 - b. Can be broadly broken down into three categories: **belief in the truth** about the real Jesus Christ, **obedience** to God’s commands, life saturating **love** for God and, as a result, for God’s people.
 - i. 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.
 - ii. 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.
 - c. Evidence that gives us assurance of our new life in Christ: (List mostly taken from Dr. Steve Lawson)
 - i. Belief in the true Christ
 1. 1 John 1:1-3 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
 2. John, the author, was an **eyewitness**.
 - ii. Confession of your sins
 1. 1 John 1:8-10 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
 2. Christians are honest about our sin, because we trust that God is gracious.
 3. 1 John 2:1-2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for

our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

- a. Trusting that Jesus is our propitiation and advocate helps us be courageous to confess to Holy God.
 - i. Do you admit wrongdoing to someone who you know is going to beat you up for it? Or to someone who will be gracious, while also committed to helping you grow? Would you ever be honest about your sin to our holy God, if you didn't trust in Jesus?
- iii. Love for God that results in obedience to His Word
 1. Love (verb and noun) used 46 times in this short letter!
 2. 1 John 2:3-6 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.
- iv. Love for our fellow Christians
 1. 1 John 2:9-11 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
 2. 1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.
 - a. Not in empty words, but action from a true heart of care and compassion
 - i. ATNA
- v. Rejection of the world
 1. 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions - is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
- vi. Discernment of the truth
 1. 1 John 4:1-7 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

2. Christians must not blindly accept every teaching or spirit or teacher who claims to have a revelation of the truth. Instead, we must test them in order to discern if they are from God or not. And we are told right here **how to test**: by holding their teachings up to the Word of God. John says that “[Whoever knows God listens to us](#)”. Who is the “us” John is talking about? Himself, and his fellow Apostles, and their true and faithful teaching about Jesus – preserved for us in the pages of the Bible.

vii. Practicing Righteousness

1. 1 John 3:4-8 [Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.](#)
2. I told you: John is very black and white. **Don't fall into the temptation to blunt the edge of the truth.** If you practice righteousness, praise God and be assured! But if you look at your life and see sinful habits everywhere you turn, beware!

viii. The presence of the Holy Spirit

1. 1 John 4:13-16 [By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.](#)
2. The Spirit's primary role is to exalt Christ Jesus – to reveal to us his beauties and glory, trustworthiness and goodness and kindness.
 - a. [If you love the true Jesus in truth, this is evidence of the Spirit's presence and work. If you want to obey God and honor Him with your life, this is evidence of his presence and work. I see his hand at work in my life when applicable Bible verses come to mind to encourage, and enlarge my faith in God, and direct me in His ways.](#)

ix. Answers to prayer

1. 1 John 5:14-15 [And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.](#)

V. Evaluate and respond:

- a. True Christian? Be assured, rest assured, live in the boldness and victory that assurance gives you. You are God's child, and He is ever with you.
- b. Not a true Christian? Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - i. John 3:14-18 [And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world](#)

might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.