

The First Epistle of St. John (Part I)

9NT7

Objective:

- ⌚ To get acquainted with the epistle and its writer.

Memory verse:

“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death” (1 John 3:14).

Introduction:

I. The Writer of the Epistle

⌚ He is John, the son of Zebedee, from Bethesda in Galilee. Although his name is not mentioned in this epistle, it has been attributed to him due to the similarity between its contents and those of the Gospel in his name, because he speaks in both about:

- The eternal Word (1 John 1:1,2).
 - The Incarnate Word that grants life to believers (1 John 1:14; 1 John 10:10; 1 John 4:2.9).
 - Faith that transfers the Christian from death into life (1 John 5:45; 1 John 3:14).
 - Love being the most important feature of a believer (1 John 3:34,35; 1 John 2:11).
- ⌚ He is the brother of James, and his mother is Salome (the cousin of the Virgin Mary). His father was a fisherman.
 - ⌚ He is the writer of the Gospel according to John, the three Epistles and the Book of Revelation.
 - ⌚ He is the only one who did not die as a martyr, yet he underwent a lot of torture. He passed away at the beginning of the second century at the age of ninety-eight.
 - ⌚ He preached the Word in Asia Minor and was banished to the Isle of Patmos.

II. To Whom Did He Write This Epistle?

He wrote it to believers, originally Gentiles, who had come into the faith. He aimed at preserving and warning them against idols (1 John 5:21).

III. Why Was It Written?

Heretical teachings appeared and were spread by false teachers:

- ⌚ Dualism: They believed that there are two gods; a good god who created the spirit and an evil god who created matter like the flesh.

⌚ Gnosticism: They imagined that they could attain salvation through knowledge only.

IV. What Is The Goal Of Writing This Epistle?

- ⌚ So that our joy may be complete (1 John 1:4).
- ⌚ That we may keep away from sin (1 John 2:1).
- ⌚ To avoid deceivers (1 John 2:26).
- ⌚ To know that life is eternal (1 John 5:13,14).

V. Subjects Dealt With In The Epistle And Corresponding References

Chapter One: The effect of the belief in the incarnation in our lives.

Chapter Two: Fellowship with God and with our fellow brothers.

Chapter Three: The blessing of adoption we have been granted and the obligations associated with it.

Chapter Four: Love within a framework of truth and wisdom.

Chapter Five: The effect of Baptism upon us and our capacity to believe in Christ our Lord

Lesson Outline:

I. Chapter One

A. Purpose

To clarify the vital value of the belief in the incarnation.

II. Main Points

A. The reality of the Incarnation of the Word, the Giver of Life (Chapter One and Two).

- ⌚ The body that Christ took on was a real body (1 John 1:1).
- ⌚ The body He took from the holy Virgin is God, the Word “the life was manifested”.
- ⌚ The incarnation provided the opportunity for man to get intimately close to God and to know Him fully.

B. What we first get to know about our fellowship with Christ. He is Light, and the characteristics of light are:

- ⌚ Clarity: So that all those who share fellowship with Him are lucid and clear in their faith.
- ⌚ Uprightness: For in God there is no change or circumvention.
- ⌚ Darkness cannot be overpowering: It cannot overcome the light, for light shines in the darkness and is unaffected.

C. Signs of fellowship with Christ

- ⌚ Walking in the light (Romans 13:12).
- ⌚ Humility: If we say we do not sin, we deceive ourselves.
- ⌚ Continuous repentance: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just.

Applications:

A. Quote the verses that underline the following meanings, basing your answers upon your study of chapter one:

- ⌚ The goal of the incarnation is to grant us fellowship and enjoyment of the true life.
- ⌚ The goal of the incarnation is to allow us to follow the Light and walk in it.
- ⌚ The confession of sin is a Christian obligation.

B. Based on the Gospel and the Epistles of John, explain what is meant by the following:

- ⌚ The Word; The Life; The Love; The Joy; The Light.
- ⌚ Can you quote verses that relate several of these together?

C. Practice the mystery of confession fearlessly and shamelessly, so that you may live in the light.

D. Practice walking in the light and do not act in the darkness.