

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



## THAT YOU MAY KNOW – A STUDY OF 1,2 & 3 JOHN *The Tests of True Christianity - 1 John Overview*

*“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—<sup>2</sup> the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—<sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” – 1 John 1:1-4 (NKJV)*

We are beginning a new study this evening that is going to take us through 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John. I’m super excited about this new study. These little books (or letters) tucked right back at the end of the New Testament are so packed with important truth and applicable principles for the Christian life. We are titling this study of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John, “That You May Know.” The key word in these little books/letter of John is the word “know,” with its related words, occurring at least 53 times in the books. There are some things that John wants us to “know” that will both strength and prove our faith... some things we need to know... some things we can know that will grow our faith, affirm our faith, prove our faith.

You there are so many things that are “unknowns” in our lives and in our world today. This life is filled with “uncertainty.” It is difficult, at best, to navigate our day without some degree of uncertainty, fear, distrust, and doubt. There is so much to be uncertain of and to question. We question the sincerity of some, the empty promises of others, the earnestness of those who sound too good to be true. We are “uncertain” of the promises of politicians, and the reports of partisan news journalists, the pitch of used car salesmen, telephone solicitors, and T.V. advertisers. We are prone to feel so insecure because of what we can’t

know for sure... uncertainty. And perhaps for good reason. We have been let down one to many times, failed and taken advantage of, and it has made us skeptical, unsure, and sometimes afraid to trust. We say “I’ll believe it when I see it!” and “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!”, “Don’t believe everything you hear!”, “Trust, but verify!”... which is a nice way of saying I’m unsure... uncertain! We even says, “I doubt it!”... a lot! The uncertainty in this age of skepticism and doubt, can’t help but affect the lives of believers. Christians too struggle with the uncertainties of this life.

**In your opinion what are some of the uncertainties we face today in our world – List them below. Include personal as well as world uncertainties...**

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*Okay, now let’s see if you are smarter than a robot (AI).* This is going to sound pretty strange (it does/did to me anyway), but I asked the AI (Artificial intelligence) app “Chat co-pilot” on the Edge web-server about the biggest “uncertainties” that people struggle with today. Here is what this AI-robot said about today’s uncertainties... (this is interesting)

“In today’s world, **uncertainty** casts a long shadow over our lives. Here are some common areas where people grapple with uncertainty...” -AI Chat Co-pilot

### **7 Uncertainties AI Says We Most Struggle with Today:**

1. **Uncertainty about Health and Safety** - The ongoing pandemic has left us uncertain about our health, the effectiveness of vaccines, and the emergence of new variants. We wonder when life will return to normal.
2. **Uncertainty about Economic Stability** - Financial markets, job security, and inflation rates remain unpredictable. Many worry about their livelihoods and financial well-being<sup>2</sup>.
3. **Uncertainty about the Social and Political Climate** - Divisiveness, misinformation, and political unrest create an atmosphere of uncertainty. We question the stability of our societies and institutions<sup>1</sup>.
4. **Uncertainty about Climate Change** - The planet’s future is uncertain due to climate change. Extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and ecological shifts leave us wondering what lies ahead<sup>3</sup>.
5. **Uncertainty about Relationships** - Personal relationships can be unpredictable. We wonder if friendships will last, if love is forever, and if we’ll find lasting connections<sup>4</sup>.
6. **Uncertainty about Technological Advancements** - Rapid technological changes bring both excitement and uncertainty. Will AI replace jobs? How will automation impact our lives?<sup>1</sup>

7. **Uncertainty about Existential (experiential, factual, observational, observed) Questions** - We ponder the meaning of life, our purpose, and what happens after death. These philosophical uncertainties can be deeply unsettling<sup>3</sup>.

“Remember, while we can’t eliminate all uncertainty, we can manage it. Focusing on what we can control (*we can’t control much and certainly we can’t control uncertainties*), challenging our need for certainty (*we can know certainty through Christ*), and reaching out to others (*why... so we can compare notes on what we all know, life is uncertain*) can help us navigate these uncertain times”

-AI Chat Co-pilot *\*Nope! AI is not as smart as it thinks it is! Folks, it is hard if not impossible to “manage” uncertainty. You will exhaust yourself and waste a lot of stomach lining (give yourself ulcers) if you think you can “manage” uncertainty in your life. The only way to deal with uncertainty is to keep your eyes on what is certain... and that is faith in God, God and who He, is the one steady certainty, He is our hope! I believe that!*

In the midst of all the uncertainty of our day where can we find something that is more certain, something we can hold on to, that we can know for certain that can give our lives stability, a hope... a solid foundation to build our lives upon that is not built on the uncertainties of shifting sands or our day but on what we can know and build our lives upon. That what John give us in these small letter and in this study, **“That you May Know.”**

That is a little bit of an introduction to this study, but let’s dive into an overview of the first of these little books... 1 John. Let me give you some back ground information and look at perhaps the heart of this first book of the three. I’ve titled this first study, **“The Tests of True Christianity - 1 John Overview”**

Hardly a day goes by when I do not delete numerous spam and junk emails trying to get me to purchase a fake Rolex watch or college diploma. Other emails promise that I will receive millions of dollars from a total stranger, usually in Africa. I recently read in *Reader’s Digest* about a guy that was taken in by this type of scam. I was surprised that he allowed his real name and picture to appear in the magazine. I would have been too embarrassed to show my face!

Most of these phony deals are easy to spot. **But far more serious than losing some money to con artists would be to lose your soul because you bought into a false and deceptive teaching or religion...** Satan always has made sure that numerous spiritual con artists thrive at their trade. Paul warned the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, **“<sup>13</sup> For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”**

It's not easy to spot an angel of light or servant of righteousness *in disguise*! That's why the New Testament abounds with warnings about false teachers. It's easy to be led astray. In his final words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29-30, Paul predicted, *"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."*

In what are to me the most frightening words in the New Testament, Jesus warned in Matthew 7:21-23, *"<sup>21</sup> 'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*

These repeated warnings mean that we must be very careful to make sure that our Christian faith is true, both objectively and personally.

### **Some initial things we need to know:**

- (1) **We need to know that Christianity is objectively true** - Objective truth is the idea that some things will always be true and other things will always be false, regardless of our beliefs. Objective truths are fundamental truths that are true for all people, no matter what their culture or religious beliefs are. For example, fire is hot and we need food to survive, regardless of what we believe
- (2) **We need to know that the testimony about Jesus Christ is genuine and not the work of spiritual con artists** – That what we are told about Jesus in the Bible, but the writer of Scripture are accurate and true.
- (3) **We need to know that our personal faith in Christ is real, not false** - Meaning the false faith that results in hearing on judgment day, "I never knew you; depart from Me...."
- (4) **Since our eternal destiny is at stake, we need to know that we have the real deal, not a phony substitute** – A phony substitute might be man-made religion and religious practice only, or some progressive substitute of our day.

The aged apostle John wrote First John against the backdrop of influential false teachers to help his readers know that their faith was genuine and that they possessed eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Biblical scholar and theologian, John R.W. Stott writes (*The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries* [Eerdmans], p. 42), *"John's great emphasis (in 1 John) is on the differences between the genuine Christian and the spurious (false, bogus, fake, counterfeit, imitation), and how to discern between the two."* He adds (p. 50), *"The predominant theme of these Epistles is Christian certainty."*

### Some Important Word Facts for 1 John:

- (1) The key word in 1 John is the word “know” in some form.
- (2) This word is used 53 times in some form in 1 John
- (3) The Greek verb “ginosko” that means, “to know by observation and experience” occurs 15 times
- (4) The Greek word “oida” meaning, “to know by reflection” is used 25 times
- (5) The Greek verb “phaneroo” meaning “to make known” is used 9 times
- (6) The Greek noun “parresia” “confidence” or “confident” is used 4 times
- (7) 53 times John tells Christians he wants them to know some things for certain

The words “know” in some form is used 53 times in 1 John... Again, John wants us to know some things with certainty! I hope this study will bring come “certainty” to your life... some knowing... really knowing your life.

### **HISTORICAL SETTING AND BACKGROUND**

I agree with the consensus of scholars that the apostle John wrote these three epistles late in his life near the end of the first century.

- John had moved to Ephesus, on the west coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).



The Setting of 1 John  
c. A.D. 85

John likely wrote 1 John from Ephesus, where apparently he had relocated near the time of the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in A.D. 70. The letter was probably intended to be read by the church in Ephesus and perhaps also by other churches in the surrounding cities. Ephesus was a wealthy and highly influential port city in the Roman province of Asia, and it was renowned for its temple of Artemis (Diana).

- Perhaps Paul’s warning to the Ephesian elders some thirty years before had come to pass.
- A number of false teachers had arisen in the churches of that area.
- John uses strong terms to describe these men, showing that they were not true Christians who merely had different opinions on some minor matters.

### 8 Descriptive Terms or Names John Give to False Teachers:

- (1) False prophets – 1 John 4:1
- (2) Antichrists - 1 John 2:18, 22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7
- (3) Liars – 1 John 2:22
- (4) Deceivers - 2 John 7; 1 John 2:26 [verb]
- (5) He states that they are not of God – 1 John 4:6
- (6) He says they are from the devil – 1 John 3:8, 10
- (7) He states they are of the world - 1 John 4:5
- (8) He says they do not know God – 1 John 3:6; 1 John 4:6

***John says their purpose was to deceive the Christians on important matters of doctrine and practice (1 John 2:26)***

- He states in 1 John 2:26, “*These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you*” (see also, 2 John 7).
- They had at one time been in the church, but they had left to form their own churches, based on their supposedly “enlightened” view of things.
- John writes 1 John 2:19, “*They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.*”
- Probably they had taken a number of church members with them and they were actively recruiting from those who had not left with them.
- They probably said, “*We used to believe just as you do, but we’ve moved to something better. We have deeper knowledge than we used to have. Come and check it out!*”
- ★ ➤ Whenever that sort of thing happens, it creates a lot of confusion and disruption in the church. Those who remain in the church begin to wonder, “Could those people be right? Am I missing something? How can we know that we’re right?” Those who leave are critical of the church leaders and point out imperfections in the church. Those who stay behind begin to notice these flaws. Pretty soon, the entire church is engulfed in turmoil.
- Although John never identifies himself by name or calls himself an apostle, he writes with strong apostolic authority.
- He was the “apostle of love” or “the beloved disciple” and he was pushing 90 years of age, but he confronts the false teachers and their errors head on!
- He begins by asserting that he knows what he is talking about, because he was there with Jesus from the start.
- He had heard Him, seen Him, and even touched Him (1 John 1:1), and the message that he was proclaiming was none other than that which he and his fellow apostles had received directly from Jesus Christ (1 John 1:2-3, 5).
- John does not paint in subtle tones, but in bold black and white.
- John makes many exclusive, either-or statements.

**7 Either-Or Statements from John:**

- (1) **1 John 1:6** - “*If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*”
- (2) **1 John 1:8** - “*If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*”
- (3) **1 John 2:4** - “*The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*”
- (4) **1 John 2:15** – “*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.*” He says that either you love the world or you love the Father, but not both (2:15).

- (5) **1 John 2:22-23** – “<sup>22</sup> Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” Either you have the Father and the Son or you don’t (2:22-23).
- (6) **1 John 3:6-9** – “<sup>6</sup> Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. <sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. <sup>8</sup> He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.” Either you are born of God and do not practice sin or you are not born of God and do practice sin (3:6-9).
- (7) **1 John 3:10-12** – “<sup>10</sup> In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. <sup>11</sup> For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, <sup>12</sup> not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.” Either you are a child of God and love your brother or you’re a child of the devil and hate your brother (3:10-12).

- There are other examples, but they all add up to show that John isn’t subtle.
- ★ ➤ He paints the two options in bold relief so that if anyone is in the middle, he will be forced to commit himself to the truth or walk knowingly into error.
- He was not in favor of modifying foundational truths to fit the times (see 1 John 2:24).

## FALSE TEACHERS

Just who were these false teachers in John’s short letters, and what was the heart of their error? We cannot know for certain, but we can make some educated guesses based on John’s direct references to their teaching, as well as the positive emphasis that he feels is necessary to counteract it. It’s kind of like we’re listening to one side of a phone conversation and trying to figure out what the other party was saying based on what we hear. Here’s what we can figure out... these false teachers were propagating a three-fold error.

### The 3 Fold Error Propagated by False Teachers: (that helps us identify them)

- (1) **Doctrinal error** - First, there was a doctrinal error regarding the person of Jesus Christ. They denied that Jesus was the Christ (2:22). This probably did not mean that they denied that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, but rather that they denied His divine Sonship (2:23; 4:15). Also, they denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh. John warns in **1 John 4:2**, “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God” (see also, 2 John 7). In other words, they denied that Jesus was God in human flesh. These heretics also claimed to be more progressive than the apostles, and that they had the Father without the Son (2 John 9; 1 John 2:22-23). Most

theological errors go astray on the person and/or work of Christ, because these subjects are essential to the Christian faith.

- (2) **Ethical or moral error** - The second main error of these heretics was *ethical* or moral. As we saw in James 5:19-20, theological errors usually go hand in hand with moral errors. These heretics either denied that sin exists in our nature and practice or they said that sin does not matter since it does not interfere with our fellowship with God. John soundly refutes this in 1:5-10. These teachers were antinomian (“against the law”), saying, “We know Christ, but we aren’t hung up with all of these commandments! We’re free in Christ and don’t worry about mere rules!” But, as F. F. Bruce points out (*The Epistles of John* [Eerdmans], p. 26), “Christians stand on the brink of disaster when they begin to modify the adjective ‘ethical’ with the adverb ‘merely.’” John soundly refutes this moral error, beginning in 2:3-6.
- (3) **Relational error** - The third error of the heretics was *relational*: while undoubtedly they claimed to be loving (who would not?), in practice they did not demonstrate genuine, biblical love for others. Probably their claim to special, deeper knowledge caused them to come across with arrogance. They were hostile and intolerant of those who didn’t agree with them. Greed caused them to not care for the needy in practical ways (3:16-18).

Who were these men (historically)? While there is much debate, many scholars identify them as “**Cerinthian Gnostics.**”

- Gnosticism was the philosophical blend of various pagan, Jewish, and semi-Christian systems of thought.
- Its two main tenets were dualism and illumination.
- Dualism meant that all matter is evil and spirit is good. Since matter is evil, a good God could not have created the material universe.
- Hence the Gnostics posited a series of emanations from the Supreme Being, each a bit more removed, until one who was sufficiently remote created the world.
- Since matter is evil, they could not conceive of how God could take on a human body subject to pain, suffering, and death. Thus they denied the incarnation.
- Cerinthus was a Gnostic living in Ephesus.
- The early church father, Polycarp, who knew John, told a story about the apostle going to bathe at the public bathhouse in Ephesus, when he learned that Cerinthus was inside. John rushed out without bathing, exclaiming, “**Let us fly, lest even the bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within**” (in Stott, p. 46).
- Cerinthus taught that Jesus was not born of a virgin, but was the natural son of Joseph and Mary. He was a very good and righteous man.
- At Jesus’ baptism, “the Christ” descended on him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler. Jesus then proclaimed the unknown Father and performed miracles.
- At last, the Christ departed from Jesus and the human Jesus suffered, died, and rose again, while the Christ remained untouched, since He is a spirit being.
- So Cerinthus separated the man Jesus from the divine Christ.



It would seem that John wrote the doctrinal part of his letter against these pernicious errors. This is especially in focus in 1 John 5:6, “*This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.*” John is asserting that the Christ came not only through His baptism (water), but also through His death (blood). You cannot separate the humanity of Jesus from His deity.

- The Gnostic dualism also led to some moral aberrations.
- On the one hand, since they thought that matter is evil, some Gnostics practiced strict asceticism, which is the attempt to be righteous by harsh treatment of the body.
- Others reasoned that since the enlightened spirit is separate from the evil body, morality does not matter.
- So they claimed to be righteous in spirit even while they indulged the flesh. John repeatedly confronts this error.
- The other main feature of Gnosticism was illumination.
- They claimed that the way to salvation was through secret enlightenment.
- Only the initiated, who knew their secret theories, were in the light.
- This exclusive mentality led them to despise unenlightened outsiders. It produced an arrogant lack of love.
- John repeatedly shows that genuine love is the mark of all who believe in the Savior who gave Himself for us on the cross.

## JOHN’S PURPOSE

Thus John had a two-fold purpose in writing...

### John’s 2 Fold Purpose in Writing:

- (1) A **polemical purpose** - First, he had a *polemical* (*impassioned, bold, outspoken, uncompromising*) purpose, to attack and refute the errors of Cerinthian Gnosticism. He exposes and refutes their doctrinal errors about the person of Christ. He refutes their ethical error (that obedience doesn’t matter) by showing that the one who says he abides in Christ must walk as Christ walked (2:6). And, he attacks the loveless arrogance of the false teachers by showing that true believers must love one another as Christ has loved us.
- (2) A **pastoral purpose** - John’s second purpose was *pastoral*. He wanted to cultivate assurance of who Jesus Christ is, assurance of salvation and genuine fellowship with God and with one another among his “little children” (he uses this term 7 times out of 8 in the New Testament; John 13:33 is the only exception). Regarding Jesus Christ, John wants his flock to *know with assurance who Jesus Christ is and why He came*. He is the eternal Son of God, sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world (not just of the exclusive, enlightened few; 2:2; 4:14). He assures them of this truth through three witnesses.

### **3 Witnesses to the Truth We Can Know:**

1. **Historical events witness to Jesus Christ** - *First, the historical events* witness to Jesus Christ. He was sent (4:9, 10, 14), He came (5:20), and He was manifested in the flesh (1:2; 3:5, 8; 4:2). Second, *the apostolic testimony* witnesses to Jesus Christ. The apostles had firsthand, eyewitness evidence of His reality (1:1-3; 4:14). Third, *the Holy Spirit* gives inner witness of the truth about Jesus Christ to every believer, corroborating the external witness (2:20, 27; 3:24; 4:13; 5:7, 8). John wants his children to be assured about the truth of Jesus Christ.
2. **Assurance about eternal life** - John also wants to cultivate *assurance about eternal life*. He wants his children to *know* that they have eternal life. This includes knowing that they know Jesus Christ (2:3; 5:20) and that they are in Him (2:5-6; 4:13; 5:20). They can know that they are of the truth (3:19) and are of God (5:19). They can know that they have passed out of death into life (3:14). John sums up his purpose (5:13), “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”
3. **Genuine fellowship with God and other believers** - John’s third pastoral purpose was to cultivate *genuine fellowship with God and with other believers*. He wants to bring his readers into the circle of apostolic fellowship, which is with the Father and the Son (1:3-4, 6). And, he wants them genuinely to love one another (2:3-11).

### **THE STRUCTURE OF 1 JOHN**

John does not structure his letter in a logical, closely reasoned style, as Paul often does. John is more intuitive, speaking as a bold witness. Many commentators say that it is impossible adequately to outline John’s argument. Others argue that it follows a spiral form, repeating themes for emphasis. I cobbled together my outline by borrowing from several others, along with my own analysis of the flow of thought. (See last two pages.) John’s overall theme is: ***We can be assured of the authenticity of our faith if we enjoy fellowship with God based on the truth about Jesus Christ, resulting in a lifestyle of obedience and love.***

### **CONCLUSION**

Have you bought into true Christianity, or could your faith be a cheap, phony substitute? John gives you three test questions:

#### **3 Test Questions:**

- (1) **The doctrinal test - Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, come in the flesh?**
- (2) **The ethical test - Does your life reflect growing obedience to Christ?**
- (3) **The relational test - Does your life reflect growing, practical love for others?**

Is the whole process permeated with the joy of fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ? Your eternal destiny rides on passing the test! If any of these areas is lacking, our studies in 1 John should help get you ready for the big final exam.

(See outline on next two pages.)

### **Application Questions**

- 1. Why are theological errors significant? How can we know which errors are serious and which are relatively minor?**
- 2. Why is it important to be clear about the biblical truth concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ?**
- 3. Why must the theological and the ethical always be wed? What can happen when they're separated?**
- 4. Is assurance a once and for all thing, or something that you grow in?**

### **The Theme and Outline of 1 John**

#### **Theme:**

We can be “KNOW” the authenticity of our faith if we enjoy fellowship with God based on the truth about Jesus Christ, resulting in a lifestyle of obedience and love.

#### **Outline:**

1. Authentic faith enjoys fellowship with the Father and the Son (1:1-2:2).
  - A. Prologue: the apostolic witness to Jesus Christ should lead us into authentic fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1:1-4).
  - B. The practice of authentic fellowship requires walking in the light, relating to the holy God through the blood of Jesus Christ, our Advocate (1:5-2:2).
    - (1). God is absolutely holy (1:5).
    - (2). To have fellowship with the holy God, we must walk in the light, confessing all of our sins (1:6-10).
    - (3). When we do sin, Jesus Christ is our Advocate, based on His shed blood (2:1-2).
2. Authentic faith may be tested by belief in the truth about Jesus Christ, obedience to His commands, and love for His people (2:3-5:5).
  - A. The first application of the tests (2:3-27):
    - (1). Authentic faith obeys God's commandments (2:3-6).
    - (2). Authentic faith loves God's people (2:7-11).
    - (3). Assuring clarification: John's readers have authentic faith (2:12-14).
    - (4). Authentic faith is not of the world, but rather it knows and believes the truth about Jesus Christ (2:15-27).
      - (a). Authentic faith is not of the world (2:15-17).
      - (b). Authentic faith, in contrast with the false teachers, knows and believes the truth about Jesus Christ (2:18-27).
  - B. The second application of the tests (2:28-4:6):
    - (1). Authentic faith practices a lifestyle of obedience to God (2:28-3:10).
    - (2). Authentic faith practices a lifestyle of practical love for God's people (3:11-18).

(3). Assuring clarification: a lifestyle of obedience and love will assure our hearts before God (3:19-22).

(4). Authentic faith believes in Jesus Christ in accord with the apostolic witness (3:23-4:6).

(a). Authentic faith believes in Jesus Christ and practices love and obedience (3:23-24).

(b). Authentic faith, in contrast with the false teachers, believes that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh in accord with the apostolic witness (4:1-6).

B. The third application of the tests (4:7-5:5):

(1). Authentic faith practices a lifestyle of love for God's people, based on God's great love for us (4:7-12).

(2). Authentic faith believes the apostolic witness about Jesus Christ, experiences the love of God, is assured before God, and practices love for God's people (4:13-21).

(a). Authentic faith believes the apostolic witness about Jesus Christ (4:13-15).

(b). Authentic faith experiences the love of God (4:16).

(c). Assuring clarification: authentic faith has confidence in the day of judgment because of God's love (4:17-18).

(d). Authentic faith practices love for God's people, based on His love (4:19-21).

(3). Authentic faith believes that Jesus is the Christ, loves those born of God, and obeys God's commandments (5:1-5).

(a). Authentic faith believes that Jesus is the Christ (5:1).

(b). Authentic faith loves those born of God (5:2).

(c). Authentic faith obeys God's commandments, stemming from faith in Jesus Christ (5:3-5).

3. Authentic faith is assured of eternal life (5:6-21).

A. Authentic faith is assured of eternal life because we believe in God's testimony concerning His Son (5:6-12).

B. Authentic faith is assured of eternal life because we believe all that John has written in this letter (5:13).

C. Authentic faith is assured of eternal life because we experience answers to our prayers (5:14-17).

D. Authentic faith is assured of eternal life because we know God and are separate from the world and its idols (5:18-21).