

Brief Overview of 1 John

The letter of 1 John is one of five New Testament books written by the Apostle John. The others are the Gospel of John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation. John was the only one of the 12 apostles still living when he wrote this letter.

1 John was written between 90-95A.D. from the city of Ephesus. It has five chapters, 105 verses and 2,523 words.

One feature of 1 John is the documentation of aberrant belief and behavior systems in the early days of the church. Similarly, Christians today need not be demoralized, defeated or despondent when falsehoods, deceptions and weaknesses show up in churches. We must be discerning and distinguish between truth and error, but do not become disillusioned! First and foremost, look in the mirror and confess your own sins (1 John 1:9). Take heart and know that the God of light, love and truth is at work and will prevail.

Another helpful feature from 1 John is the beautiful tripecta of an authentic Christian experience. Following Jesus begins with right belief, but not belief only. We add to our belief obedient behavior. But true godliness from 1 John adds the third key ingredient of genuine love to belief and behavior. John provides three tests by which we can evaluate our walk with the Lord: doctrinal, moral and relational.

Additionally, one of John's stated purposes is the warm reminder that we can rejoice in the assurance of salvation (5:13) because we have an advocate in Jesus Christ. He writes to reassure his readers whose faith has been shaken by some of the false teachings and divisive philosophies of their day.