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The Chapters of 1 John

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1 John

SECTION OUTLINE ONE (1 JOHN 1)

John opens his first letter with a presentation of Christ as both the life and light of believers.

I. JESUS CHRIST, THE LIFE OF BELIEVERS (1:1-4)

A. John's proclamation (1:1-2): The apostle offers a twofold description of this divine giver of life.

1. The eternal Christ (1:1a): He existed before the world began.
2. The earthly Christ (1:1b-2): John saw, heard, and touched the physical body of the Savior.

B. John's purpose (1:3-4): He writes this that we might know the two reasons for Jesus' incarnation.

1. The vertical reason (1:3): That we might experience fellowship with both the Father and Son.
2. The horizontal reason (1:4): That we might share our joy with one another.

II. JESUS CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF BELIEVERS (1:5-10)

A. The fact (1:5): "God is light and there is no darkness in him at all."

B. The fruits (1:6-10)

1. Negative (1:6, 8, 10): If we walk in darkness with unconfessed sin, we will remain barren.
2. Positive (1:7-9): If we walk in the light and confess our sin, we will be cleansed and fruitful.

SECTION OUTLINE TWO (1 JOHN 2)

John writes about the Savior, surety, sinful society, and the satanic one.

I. JOHN WRITES ABOUT THE SAVIOR (2:1-2, 24-25)

A. He is the forgiver of every sin (2:1-2).

1. He died for the sins of the saved (2:1-2a).
2. He died for the sins of the unsaved (2:2b).

B. He is the giver of eternal life (2:24-25).

II. JOHN WRITES ABOUT SURETY (2:3-14, 28-29): How can we be sure that Jesus is indeed our Savior?

A. The guidelines (2:3-11, 28-29)

1. We must obey God (2:3-6).
2. We must love God and God's people (2:7-11).
3. We must live holy lives for God (2:28-29).

B. The groups (2:12-14)

1. John writes to little children (2:12, 14a).
2. John writes to fathers (2:13a, 14b).
3. John writes to young men (2:13b, 14c).

III. JOHN WRITES ABOUT SINFUL SOCIETY (2:15-17): The apostle has in mind here the systems of this world.

A. The warning against these worldly systems (2:15)

B. The wickedness coming from these worldly systems (2:16): This wickedness is threefold.

1. The lust of the flesh (2:16a)
2. The lust of the eyes (2:16b)
3. The pride of life (2:16c)

C. The worthlessness of these worldly systems (2:17): They will all soon fade away.

IV. JOHN WRITES ABOUT THE SATANIC ONE (2:18-19, 22-23, 26)

A. The arrival of the Antichrist (2:18)

1. Many antichrists have come (2:18a).
2. The real Antichrist will come (2:18b).
- B. The apostles of the Antichrist** (2:19): They show their loyalty to him by departing from the Christian faith.
- C. The apostasy of the Antichrist** (2:22-23, 26)
 1. He will deny the true Christ (2:22-23).
 2. He will attempt to deceive true believers (2:26).

V. JOHN WRITES ABOUT THE SPIRIT (2:20-21, 27).

- A. He teaches and anoints believers** (2:27).
- B. He indwells believers** (2:20-21).

SECTION OUTLINE THREE (1 JOHN 3)

John writes about salvation.

I. THE PART PLAYED BY THE TRINITY IN BRINGING ABOUT OUR SALVATION (3:1-5, 8, 24b)

- A. The role of the Father** (3:1-3)
 1. He bestows his love upon us (3:1a).
 2. He calls us his own children (3:1b-2a).
 3. He will someday make us like Jesus (3:2b-3).
- B. The role of the Son** (3:4-5, 8)
 1. He died for our sins (3:4-5).
 2. He destroyed the works of the Devil (3:8).
- C. The role of the Spirit** (3:24b): He now indwells us.

II. THE PART PLAYED BY THE BELIEVER IN WORKING OUT OUR SALVATION (3:6-7, 9-24a)

- A. The confirmation** (3:6-7, 9-10)
 1. Question (3:6a, 7, 9): How can we know we are truly saved?
 2. Answer (3:6b, 8, 10): The one who lives in continuous sin is not of God.
- B. The compassion** (3:11-18)
 1. The exhortation to love (3:11-15): Unlike Cain, who killed his brother, we are to love our spiritual brothers and sisters.
 2. The extent of our love (3:16-18): If need be, we should be willing to lay down our life for others.
- C. The confidence** (3:19-24a): This obedience will give us great assurance as we approach God.

SECTION OUTLINE FOUR (1 JOHN 4)

John writes about discerning false prophets and loving one another.

I. LOCATE THE SPIRITS (4:1-6): We are to test those who claim to speak by the Spirit by asking whether their message comes from a false prophet, a demon, or from God.

- A. The scriptural claim** (4:1-2, 4, 6): All messages acknowledging that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh are of God.
- B. The satanic claim** (4:3, 5): All messages that do not are not of God.

II. LOVE THE SAINTS (4:7-21).

- A. What love proves** (4:7-11, 14, 19-21)
 1. Our love for God is proven by our love for one another (4:7-8, 11, 19-21).
 2. God's love for us was proven by the sacrificial death of Christ (4:9-10, 14).
- B. What love produces** (4:12-13, 15-18)
 1. God is joined to us (4:12, 15-16).
 2. We are joined to him (4:13).
 3. We are given confidence (4:17).
 4. We are protected from fear (4:18).

SECTION OUTLINE FIVE (1 JOHN 5)

John talks about a test, a testimony, and two transgressions.

I. THE TEST (5:1-5, 13-15, 18-21)

A. The Question (5:13): How do I know I am born of God?

B. The Answers (5:1-5, 14-15, 18-21)

1. The saved person believes Jesus is the Christ (5:1, 5).
2. The saved person loves and obeys God (5:2-4).
3. The saved person has his prayers answered (5:14-15).
4. The saved person does not live in continuous sin (5:18-21).

II. THE TESTIMONIES (5:6-12)

A. As given by the Father and Spirit (5:6-9, 11-12)

1. Regarding the Son of God (5:6-9): Jesus is the second person in the Trinity.
2. Regarding the saints of God (5:11-12): We have eternal life in Jesus.

B. As given by all believers (5:10): We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

III. THE TWO TRANSGRESSIONS (5:16-17): John gives direction on how a believer should pray for another believer who has committed one of these transgressions.

A. A transgression that does not lead to death (5:16a): Here prayer should be made.

B. The transgression that does lead to death (5:16b-17): Here prayer need not be made.