

Introduction to 1 John



Truth Matters Church, Inc.

1

Authorship



- ❧ No identification given
- ❧ No title or designation given in 1 John
- ❧ "Elder" title given in 2 John and 3 John
 - ❧ Caused some debate among scholars as to authorship
- ❧ Claims to be an eyewitness of Jesus
 - ❧ heard/seen/looked/touched (1Jn 1:1-3)
- ❧ Pastoral in nature
 - ❧ "my little children"
 - ❧ "beloved"
 - ❧ "children"

2

Authorship



- ✧ Apostolic in nature
 - ✧ Message we have heard and pass on to you
 - ✧ 1Cor 9:1-2 1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? **Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?** 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.
 - ✧ These things *we write (*not ministering alone)
 - ✧ Defended the Person, nature, and role of Jesus (Christology)
 - ✧ Fully God
 - ✧ Fully Man
 - ✧ The God-Man
 - ✧ Defended the attributes of God
 - ✧ God is Light, in Him there is no darkness at all (1Jn 1:5)
 - ✧ God is holy and will punish those who reject the gospel and are enslaved to sin
 - ✧ Not **writing** a new commandment, but an old commandment (1Jn 2:7)

3

Evidence that John is Author



- ✧ External evidence
 - ✧ Early church tradition unanimously ascribed the Apostle John as the author of 1 John
 - ✧ Uncontested
 - ✧ Cited by many of the early church writings
 - ✧ Hence the name of this book
 - ✧ Eventually tradition ascribed 2 John and 3 John as well

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Evidence that John is Author



- ☞ Internal evidence
 - ☞ Eyewitness account
 - ☞ Apostolic (and pastoral) in nature
 - ☞ Authoritative tone
 - ☞ Strikingly similar to gospel of John
 - ☞ Similar grammar
 - ☞ Similar theme (verse 1)
 - ☞ John 1:1,4 | 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.
 - ☞ 1John 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life
 - ☞ Similar writing style, contrasting:
 - ☞ Life and death; truth and falsehood; light and darkness; children of God and children of the devil; love and hate
 - ☞ Aged man (advanced in years)
 - ☞ Harmonizes with tone of and date letters were written

5

What we know about John



- ☞ One of the inner 3
 - ☞ Peter, James, and John (always mentioned in this order)
- ☞ Only the inner 3 witnessed:
 - ☞ Transfiguration (Mt 17: 1-8; Mk 9: 2-8; Lk 9: 28-36)
 - ☞ Raising synagogue official's daughter (Mk 5:37-43; Lk 8: 51-56)
- ☞ Jesus looked to inner 3 for support:
 - ☞ Jesus was very distressed and troubled at Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:33)
 - ☞ Yet found them sleeping (Mk 14:37)
- ☞ Jesus was closest to the inner 3
- ☞ Jesus gave James and John the nickname "Sons of Thunder"

6

Date and Place of Writing

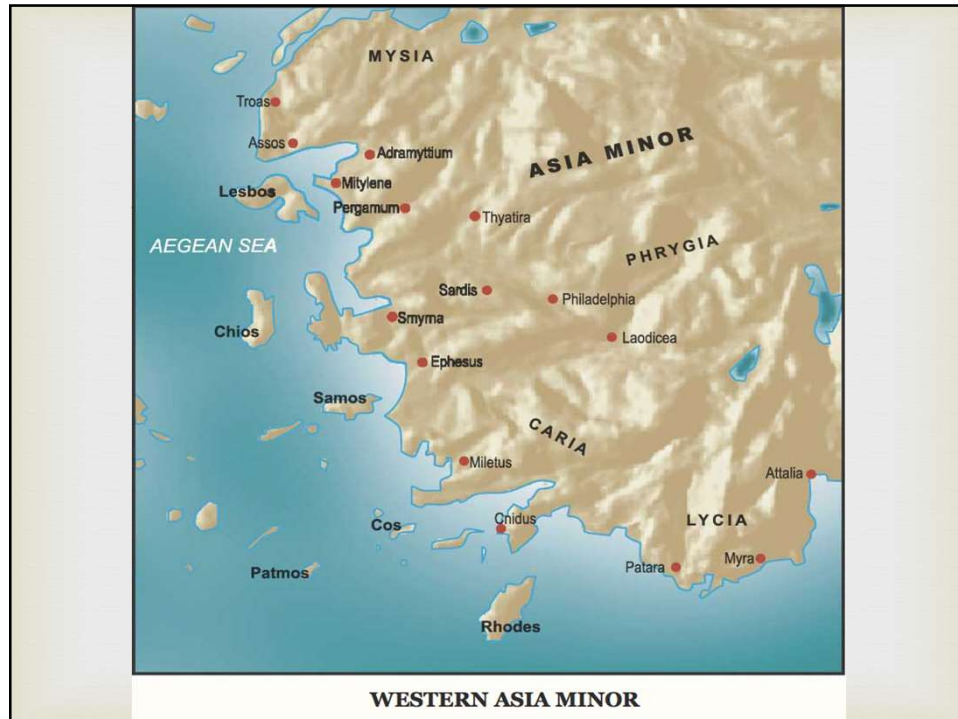
- ☞ According to church tradition
 - ☞ John spent latter years in Ephesus
 - ☞ John ministered to the churches in Western Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) ****more on this later****
 - ☞ John was at Ephesus during reign of Roman emperor, Trajan (AD 98-117)
 - ☞ John died towards end of 1st century
- ☞ Thus, John most likely wrote all 3 letters (1-3 John) in Ephesus between AD 85-100
 - ☞ 15+ years after destruction of Temple in AD 70
- ☞ It was likely intended to be distributed to the churches he was ministering to (Western Asia Minor) ****more on this later****

7

Audience

- ☞ Likely received and read the gospel of John
 - ☞ Per NAC: Eighty percent of the verses in 1 John reflect ideas and themes found in the Gospel. Burdick argues: "This finding confirms the assertion that the readers were previously familiar, at the least, with Johannine teaching, but **it also strengthens the probability that they possessed that teaching in the written form of the Fourth Gospel.**" Burdick's position is plausible, and given the possibility that the epistles, especially 1 and 2 John, address Christological errors that resulted from a misinterpretation of the Gospel of John, the priority of the Gospel is tentatively affirmed.
- ☞ Likely churches he ministered to in the region of Western Asia Minor:

8



9

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☞ Likely churches he ministered to in the region of Western Asia Minor, including:

- ☞ Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (the 7 churches in Revelation 2-3)
- ☞ Interestingly enough the 7 churches in Revelation too were combating false teaching

10

Audience



- ☞ Ephesus
 - ☞ Doesn't tolerate evil men
 - ☞ Puts to test those who call themselves to be apostles, but found them to be false apostles
 - ☞ Hated the deeds of the *Nicolaitanes
 - ☞ *Apparently those who professed to be Christians, but extended their liberty to live in sin (licentiousness)
 - ☞ Left first love, stopped doing deeds they did at 1st

11

Audience



- ☞ Smyrna
 - ☞ Persecuted by those who claim to be Jews and are not, but a synagogue of Satan
 - ☞ The devil is about to cast some of them into prison
 - ☞ Tribulation for 10 days
 - ☞ Only commendation
 - ☞ No warnings given by Jesus

12

Audience



- ☞ Pergamum
 - ☞ Satan's throne
 - ☞ Antipas was martyred
 - ☞ Some held to the teaching of Balaam
 - ☞ Led Israel astray
 - ☞ Ate foods sacrificed to idols
 - ☞ Engaged in sexual immorality
 - ☞ Unlike Ephesus, some held to the teachings of the Nicolaitanes
 - ☞ Licentiousness

13

Audience



- ☞ Thyatira
 - ☞ Tolerated the woman Jezebel
 - ☞ Self-proclaimed prophetess
 - ☞ Taught ok to indulge in sexual immorality
 - ☞ Taught ok to eat foods sacrificed to idols
 - ☞ Held to false doctrine
 - ☞ "deep things of Satan"

14

Audience



- ☞ Sardis
 - ☞ Found dead
 - ☞ Deeds not complete
 - ☞ Soiled their garments
 - ☞ lived a sinful, impure, unholy life

15

Audience



- ☞ Philadelphia
 - ☞ Kept Jesus's Word
 - ☞ Did not deny Jesus's Name
 - ☞ Persecuted by those who say they are Jews and are not, but a synagogue of Satan.
 - ☞ Only commendation
 - ☞ No warnings given by Jesus

16

Audience



- ☞ Laodicea
 - ☞ Deeds neither cold or hot
 - ☞ Lukewarm
 - ☞ Self deceived
 - ☞ Viewed themselves as blessed by God (riches, wealth, lack nothing)
 - ☞ However, Jesus found them to be wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked
 - ☞ No evidence of salvation
 - ☞ No evidence of sanctification

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Audience (Summary)



- ☞ Likely received and read the gospel of John
- ☞ Likely churches John ministered to in the region of Western Asia Minor, including:
 - ☞ Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (the 7 churches in Revelation)
- ☞ Likely churches who are inundated with false teaching, persecution from Jews, apostasy, false conversions, toleration of sin

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Setting



- ❧ Heretical teachings resulted in apostasy
 - ❧ 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.
- ❧ The defectors tried to persuade others to join them
 - ❧ Romans 1:32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.
- ❧ Inundated with several forms of false teaching
 - ❧ Nicolaitanes
 - ❧ Balaam
 - ❧ Jezebel
 - ❧ Judaism
 - ❧ Gnosticism

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Setting (False Beliefs)



- ❧ Nicolaitanes / Balaam / Jezebel
 - ❧ Sexual immorality
 - ❧ Ate food sacrificed to idols

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Setting (False Beliefs)



☞ Judaism

- ☞ Must be circumcised (sign of circumcision)
- ☞ Observance “works” of the Law
 - ☞ Temple worship
 - ☞ Sacrificial system
 - ☞ Festivals, Feasts
- ☞ Elevated Talmud (tradition to same level as Scripture)
- ☞ Their religion only way to heaven

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Setting (False Beliefs)



☞ Gnosticism

- ☞ Attacked the Person and work of Jesus
 - ☞ Since physical matter is evil, Jesus’s physical body only “seemed” to be real
 - ☞ In other words, Jesus was not really a human being
 - ☞ 1 John 1:1 What was from the beginning, what **we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands**, concerning the Word of Life
 - ☞ Christ’s “spirit” came down from heaven during His baptism, but departed before His crucifixion
 - ☞ Undermined Jesus’s atonement for sin

22

Setting (False Beliefs)



☞ Gnosticism

- ☞ Thus, gnostics refused to view Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ
 - ☞ Rejected the Deity and Humanity of the earthly Jesus
 - ☞ 1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.
 - ☞ 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
 - ☞ Minimized seriousness of sin, rejected its reality
 - ☞ "I'm a good person"
 - ☞ "God knows my heart"
 - ☞ 1 John 1:6-10 | 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 **If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.** 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

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Purpose



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25

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☞ To reaffirm sanctification

☞ 1 John 2:1-2 | 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

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☞ To warn them of false teachers

☞ 1 John 2:26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

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☞ 1 John 2:26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

☞ To provide them assurance

☞ 1 John 5:13-14 | 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.

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Purpose (Summary)



- So John is penning this epistle to combat such false teaching by reaffirming the gospel, the Person and work of Christ (Christology), warning them of false teachers/doctrine, reaffirming their participation in sanctification, and to reassure them of their salvation

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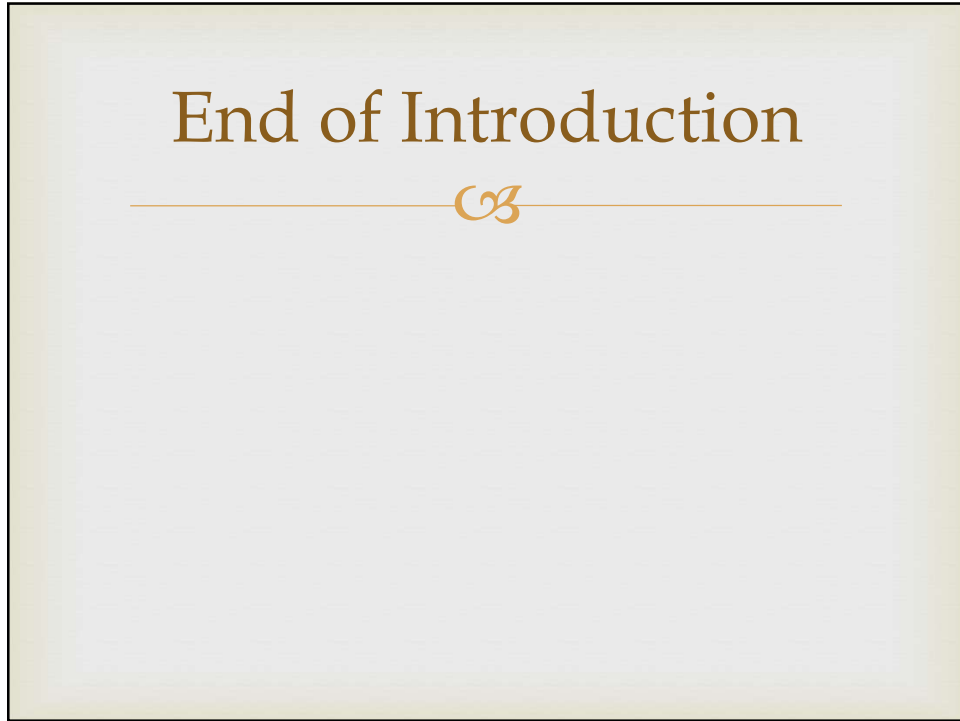
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SIDE NOTE: It is also very likely that soon after penning 1John, John received a series of visions when exiled to the island of Patmos (SW of Aegean Sea) and penned the book of Revelation. Where John sees the judgments that follows for giving into false teaching and succumbing to persecution

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