

BE CERTAIN OF YOUR SALVATION

An Overview of the Book of 1 John

Pastor Bruce Henry

Sunday, September 10, 2017

Idea: *God wants us to know if/that we are truly saved.*

Intro: *1 John was written to a group of Christians who were facing the threat of counterfeit Christianity. John wrote to them to challenge them to abide in genuine Christianity. Their commitment to the truth would protect them from error and promote true love for one another.*

Author: The apostle John

Background: Literary Form, Recipients, Date, etc.

Purposes:

- 1:3 – to increase their fellowship with him
- 1:4 – to complete his and their joy
- 2:1 – to help keep them from sinning
- 2:26 – to warn them about deceivers
- 5:13 – to provide a foundation for the assurance of their salvation

False Teaching / Heresy: Gnosticism

Gnosticism had two basic beliefs:

1. Secret knowledge gained as a gift of revelation by God.
2. All matter is inherently evil.

- Theologically, their most significant error was the denial of the real incarnation of God in Jesus. Docetists denied that Jesus was ever really human, but insisted He only seemed to be human. Cerinthians claimed that Jesus was a mere man who had the Spirit of Christ come upon Him at His baptism and leave Him just before His suffering on the cross. In this way, the divine Christ was not born nor did He suffer.

- Ethically, the Gnostics' most significant error came as a result of their belief that matter was evil. Some Gnostics treated their bodies harshly (Col. 2:21-23). Some Gnostics treated their bodies and moral behavior with great licentiousness. *This was the teaching John was battling, leading to his insistence upon obedience to God.

Structure: Three distinguishing tests of authentic Christianity: theological, moral, and social:

Truth – belief that Jesus in the flesh is truly the Son of God.
Obedience – consistent obedience to the commandments of God.
Love – love for one another in the family of God.

Practical Value: God has left for today's Christian a deposit of guidance and hope in this letter of 1 John.

There is guidance into the right way to live the Christian life and the right beliefs that are the basis of that life.

There is hope in the assurance that can be gained through understanding the beliefs which are necessary for a person to receive eternal life and what characteristics that life will naturally produce.

Summary: *First John is an epistle written by the apostle John at the end of the first century to Christians in the area of Ephesus. John's desire was to gird them up in their faith so they would find assurance in their salvation and be equipped to refute the false teachers of the Gnostic movement. He did this in his letter with the repetition of three tests of life: moral, social, and doctrinal.*