

Week 2: Overview and 1 John 1:1-4

- 1) Review of last week's lesson. Any questions? Did anyone read the fish article about making observations?
- 2) Study of Today's Passage
 - a) The author's stated purpose for writing
 - i) 13 times the words "write" (1), "writing" (6), or "written" (6) appear in the letter
 - ii) 4 times these words are directly referring to "these things". 3 times the words "so that" are used.
 - (1) 1:4 – so that our joy may be made complete
 - (2) 2:1 – so that you may not sin
 - (3) 2:26 – concerning those who are trying to deceive you
 - (4) 5:13 – so that you may know that you have eternal life
 - iii) Whereas the gospel of John was written to lead a person to life-giving salvation in Jesus Christ who is the Son of God (justification), the epistle of 1 John was written to give a person life-cleansing assurance of that salvation through the same Son of God (sanctification). (cf John 20:30-31 and 1 John 5:13)
 - b) The Author's Identity
 - i) Internal evidence in 1 John
 - (1) Personal witness (meaning one of the disciples) (1:1)
 - (a) Have heard
 - (b) Have seen
 - (c) Have touched
 - (2) Speaks with the knowledge and authority of an apostle (1:2; 4:14,16)
 - (3) The Apostle John fits these descriptions
 - ii) Internal evidence in the Bible – similar style of writing as the gospel of John
 - (1) Common phrases, but not always identical as might be an imitation
 - (2) Restricted range of vocabulary
 - (3) Contrasting opposite pairs
 - (a) Light and darkness (1:5)
 - (b) Has life and does not have life (5:12)
 - (c) Love and hate (2:9-10; 4:20)
 - (d) Truth and lies (1:6; 2:4)
 - (e) Etc.
 - (4) The apostle John is widely accepted as the author of the gospel of John, so would also have authored 1 John, using this argument.
 - iii) External evidence
 - (1) Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (c. 69-115) writes words that are similar to 1 John 4:2-3. Polycarp, in his youth, had known John.
 - (2) Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (c. 80-155) used testimonies from the First Epistle of John.
 - (3) Early church writers attribute the epistle to John the Apostle.

iv) John's Ministry

- (1) Not mentioned in the book of Acts after chapter 8. Only mentioned in the Pauline epistles in Galatians 2:9.
- (2) It is generally accepted that John spent the latter years of his life at Ephesus.
 - (a) Justin Martyr (c. 100-165)
 - (b) Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, but born in Asia Minor (c. 140-203)
 - (c) Clement of Alexandria (c. 155-215)
- (3) Early church tradition supports John the Apostle as the author of the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:1). John lived for a time on the island of Patmos during the latter years of his life (Revelation 1:9). Patmos is off the west coast of Asia Minor, near Ephesus. This is consistent with John ministering to the churches in Asia Minor.



- (4) John had occasion to develop intimate relationships with his audience (2:1,7; 3:2,21; 4:1,7,11).
 - (5) It is generally accepted that “the elder” in 2 John and 3 John was the same person as John the Apostle. Therefore, John was also an elder, possibly of the church in Ephesus.
- v) What is a textual problem with John as the author?
- (1) “We” is used in reference to the author(s) (1 John 1:1-5)
 - (2) Is John referring to other disciples who also were eyewitnesses with him?
 - (3) Later in the letter, John uses “I” to refer to himself as the single author.
- c) Audience
- i) Specific church or person not mentioned in 1 John, so perhaps a group of churches.
 - ii) John had an intimate relationship with them, considering how he addresses them in 1John (e.g. “My little children”, “Beloved”)
 - iii) John was very familiar with the churches in the area of Asia Minor. See Revelation 2 and 3.
 - iv) It is very possible that 1 John was written to the Christians in the many churches in Asia Minor, where John spent considerable time and became intimately acquainted with them.

- d) Location and Date of writing
 - i) Probably from Ephesus
 - ii) Possibly between 85 and 90 A.D.
 - (1) After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - (2) Possibly before Domitian (Roman Emperor from 81-96 A.D.) turned cruel and persecuted the Jews and Christians toward the end of his reign.
 - (3) Likely after the writing of the gospel of John and before the writing of 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation.
- e) 1 John 1:1-4
 - i) Main sentence
 - (1) Remember that the original Greek does not have punctuation. There are slight nuances in the English rendering, depending upon the translation.
 - (2) Answer #1
 - (a) Verses 1-3: “What . . . we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; . . .”
 - (b) Subject -- we
 - (c) Verb – proclaim
 - (d) Object – what
 - (i) What was from the beginning
 - (ii) What we have seen . . .
 - (iii) What we have looked at and touched . . .
 - (iv) What we have seen and heard
 - (3) Answer #2
 - (a) Verse 4: “These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.”
 - (b) Subject – we
 - (c) Verb – write
 - (d) Object – these things
 - (4) In this case, both sentences say the same thing. There is no ambiguity.
 - ii) Word of Life
 - (1) This is Jesus, who became flesh (John 1:1,4,14; 1 John 1:3)
 - (2) Jesus existed from eternity past
 - (3) Jesus was on earth in physical form, such that he could be seen, touched, and heard. That is, He was a man.
 - (4) Jesus is more than life; He is eternal life, living on into eternity future.
 - (5) Jesus was with the Father.
 - (6) Jesus is the Father’s Son.
 - (7) Jesus is the Christ (1:3), that is, the Messiah, that is, the Savior.
 - iii) Fellowship
 - (1) Fellowship comes from the Greek *koinonia*, meaning “common”.
 - (2) Horizontal – can have fellowship with “us” (John and whomever else is included in “us”). The common element is our mutual relationship with Christ.
 - (3) Vertical –
 - (a) Can have fellowship with the Father and with His Son. (1 Corinthians 1:9)

- (b) Can have fellowship with the Holy Spirit, too. (2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:1)
- (c) A common element is that we are made in the image of God and can relate with Him. (Genesis 1:26).

3) Handouts for Week 3

- a) “Nobody needs to be afraid of exegesis unless he is lazy or careless.” E. Haller
- b) “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)
- c) A More Detailed Plan for Bible Study

i) Overview Study for Familiarity **OBSERVATION**

- (1) Gain familiarity with the content of the book
- (2) Gain familiarity with the historical background
- (3) Gain familiarity with the argument of the book

ii) Intensive Study for Analysis

- (1) Observational analysis: gain an overview of the paragraph
 - (a) Place the paragraph in its context
 - (b) Determine the literary genre (e.g. TYPE: historical narrative, epistolary, apocalyptic; FORM: poetical, parabolic, proverbial, other)
 - (c) Note basic subject matter (by asking the 5 W and 1 H questions about people, places, events, and ideas of the paragraph)
 - (d) State a provisional purpose of the paragraph (which is an initial “intelligent guess” about the meaning intended by the author).
- (2) Structural analysis: prepare a structural layout (diagramming)
- (3) Grammatical analysis: make grammatical classifications
 - (a) Identify verbs and their tenses
 - (b) Identify infinitives (“to *verb*”) and participles (“*verb*-ing”)
 - (c) Identify pronouns and their antecedents
 - (d) Examine words and word order
 - (i) Identify modifiers (adjectives and adverbs)
 - (ii) Identify articles (“the”, “a”, “an”)
 - (iii) Identify repeated words
 - (iv) Identify abnormal word order
 - (v) Identify repeated syntactical construction
- (4) Lexical analysis: engage in word studies
- (5) Historical/conceptual analysis: review background information
- (6) Theological analysis: consider any theological problem

INTERPRETATION

- (7) Exegetical analysis: state an interpretation and validate it

iii) Extensive Study for Synthesis

- (1) State the “final” purpose of the paragraph
- (2) Write a polished translation of the paragraph
- (3) Perfect the exegetical outline
- (4) Trace the argument
- (5) Prepare a synopsis of the argument of the paragraph

(6) Write a verse-by-verse commentary

(7) Make several applications

APPLICATION

- d) Daily Assignments for 1 John 1:5-2:2
- i) Day 1:
 - (1) Worship God for providing us with 1 John, a book that tells us that we can have assurance of salvation, which leads to joy.
 - (2) Read 1 John 1:1-2:2
 - (3) Perform an observational analysis on these paragraphs.
 - (4) Fill in the following “intelligent guess” information onto the SURVEY CHART OF 1 JOHN.
 - (a) PURPOSE
 - (b) Paragraph Titles for 1:1, 1:5, 1:8, and 2:1
 - (c) KEY VERSE
 - (d) KEY WORDS to date
 - ii) Day 2:
 - (1) Pray for perseverance in studying the scriptures.
 - (2) Do a structural analysis of these paragraphs.
 - (3) Meditate on what you learned about God today.
 - iii) Day 3:
 - (1) Thank God for a new day to study His Word.
 - (2) Do a grammatical analysis on this week’s passage.
 - (3) Mark significant words with a color and/or symbol of your choice.
 - (4) What new understanding do you have of the conditions for *fellowship* from these verses?
 - iv) Day 4:
 - (1) Begin with prayer.
 - (2) Do a lexical analysis (word study) of *propitiation* (NASB) or *atoning sacrifice* (NIV) found in 1 John 2:2. You may use a Bible lexicon or dictionary. Or view http://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_325-26.htm and find *propitiation* about 25% of the way into this web page.
 - (3) What black and white distinctions do you see in this passage?
 - (4) Respond to God for his complete treatment of sin in your life.
 - v) Day 5:
 - (1) Ask God for understanding today as you move into the interpretation step.
 - (2) Prepare a synopsis of the argument being made about our *walk* from this passage.
 - (3) Revisit the SURVEY CHART and make any modifications that are necessary.
 - (4) Worship God for being Light!