

The First Letter of the Apostle John
"Authentic Christianity"
Lesson # 1

Could you tell an authentic \$100.00 bill from one that is counterfeit? Do you know how one can tell the whether a bill is counterfeit?

Purpose statement:

We will study the Apostle John's first letter to congregations in Asia Minor to identify those "marks" (i.e. beliefs and practices) which separate authentic Christianity from those that are false.

- I. Reviewing the difference between Scriptures that are *Descriptive* and those that are *Prescriptive*

Descriptive Scriptures

Prescriptive Scriptures

📖 Is the account of David (I Samuel 17) slaying Goliath prescriptive or descriptive?

📖 Is Ephesians 2:8,9 prescriptive or descriptive?

What problems arise when we interpret or understand a Descriptive Scripture to be Prescriptive?

I John is largely **prescriptive** in its content.

II. The Importance of Context

- A. Who
- B. When
- C. Where
- D. Why

E. Gnosticism (from Greek *gnosis* which means “knowledge”)

1. **Matter** (things of this earth, including the human body) is evil and **Spirit** (God, your soul) is good.
2. Salvation occurs when the Spirit escapes the body.
3. This escape (salvation) is achieved through accumulating special or secret or lofty knowledge about God. (See I John 2:4,6,9)

Implications:

- ✓ How one treats his or her body is of no consequence.
- ✓ Christ was a spirit who joined a body named Jesus but left him before he died.

III. The Word of Life (I John 1:1-4)

In vs. 1 to what or whom does “That” refer?

What gives us the feeling that John is in a court or trying to prove something?

Read John 1:14. What do we believe is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the word he preached and taught?

What does John declare he must now do with what he heard, saw, and touched?

What two reasons does he have for doing this?

IV. Spiritual Implications

Jesus was true God and true man at the same time. What is so dangerous about teaching or suggesting that he was not one or the other?

If he was not true man...

If he was not true God...

What do these verses imply is the richest, deepest kind of fellowship?

Siloah Lutheran Church

Adult Bible Study

I John

The First Letter of the Apostle John

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Lesson # 2

From Lesson # 1

What is the difference between **Prescriptive** and **Descriptive** Scriptures?

John is addressing a heresy called *Gnosticism* (“knowledge”). According to the Gnostics, how is one saved?

In I John 1:5-10, John takes on two false claims. In 2:1-10, he identifies three “marks” of the authentic Christian.

I. A false claim regarding lifestyle (1:5-7)

When the Scriptures use the word “light,” what is meant?

What claim do you suppose the Gnostics have put forth?

What makes the claim a lie?

II. A false claim regarding sin? (1:8-10)

What claim has apparently been made about sin?

In what way does this claim make God out to be a liar?

What has happened to the word or the concept of “sin” in our society and in many religious circles and why?

III. The “mark” of an authentic Christian

What “mark” do you see in v. 9?

IV. Sin’s cure (2:1,2)

In these two verses, John may be anticipating a thought that is confusing or troubling his audience. What might it be?

Reviewing terms

- Objective justification (John 1:29)
- Subjective justification (John 3:16)
- Universalism
- Exclusivism

V. Another “mark” of an authentic Christian (2:3-6)

What word in this section summarizes the “mark” John is highlighting?

What is the motive for living this “mark?”

Does serving “the higher good” give one an exemption from ordering his personal life under God?

VI. Another “mark” of the authentic Christian (2:7-11)

What is the mark laid out in these verses?

What does John mean by the reference to stumbling in v. 10?

Agree or disagree: Hating is a choice.