

The Letters to the Churches- God's Love Letter to His Children....I John 1:1-5:20

The letter of First John is not addressed to any one church or individual and is therefore considered to be a general epistle to the church. The writer of this epistle was the Apostle John. This John is not John the Baptist. John wrote five New Testament books, second only to Paul. (***John the Gospel, I, II, III John and Revelation***).

This letter is a very tender letter with a strong message. The names John uses for Christians are very good indicators of the heart of God toward His children. Notice we are called, "***Little Children***" in ***2:1, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21***. The second name Christians are called is "***beloved***", in "***3:2, 21, 4:1, 7, 11***).

Purpose:

John gives us four purposes or reason that he wrote this epistle.

- 1- Add to their Joy ***1:4***.
- 2- Guard them against sin ***2:1***.
- 3- To warn against false teacher ***2:26***.
- 4- To strengthen their faith in Christ and give assurance of eternal life ***5:13***.

Key Words:

There are several key words that occur in I John. "***Fellowship***" (5), "***Love***" (34), "***Know***" (27).

The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia* (*koy-nohn-ee'-ah*).

The very fact that love is used so many times lets us KNOW that God has a special affection for His children. We can say that this is God's Love Letter to His Children.

However the key word that I would like to focus on for our study of this book is the word "KNOW." There are many things that the Word of God teaches us that we can "know." (I have

take the liberty to make the occurrences of know all caps for emphasis only)

I- Assurance of Salvation:

We can have the assurance our faith is real if we are obedient to Him and His commandments. You will notice the obvious when we say we know Him and obey not in these verses. A righteous life indicates regeneration and a new birth. Notice the following scriptures related to assurance of salvation.

I Jn 2:3-5 "And hereby we do KNOW that we KNOW him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I KNOW him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby KNOW we that we are in him. "

I Jn 3:24 "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we KNOW that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

I Jn 5:2 "By this we KNOW that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments."

Can we know for sure that we are saved? The Word of God teaches that we can.

I Jn 5:13 "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

II- Know it is the Last Times:

I Jn 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we KNOW that it is the last time.

Beloved when John wrote this some two thousand years ago he felt, as most have down through the ages, that it was the last time. How can it have been the last times two thousand years ago and still not be finished? I remind us that a thousand years is as a day and day is as a thousand years. We also understand that God is timeless and that His time frames and perspectives are different than ours. Notice it says, "**last time**" not last year.

The way we can know it is the last times is that "**antichrist shall come.**" We look around even in our day and see many voices crying that they are the Christ. David Koresh, Sun Yung Moon, and others have come on the scene with the cries that they are Christ. Notice it says "**anti**" or against Christ. Today there is a spirit of hostility that is against God, which has certainly been thought out the, "last time." From our prospective it seems to be intensifying.

III- Know the Truth: 1:20-21

I Jn 2:20 "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye KNOW all things. I have not written unto you because ye KNOW not the truth, but because ye KNOW it, and that no lie is of the truth."

The Holy Spirit has been given to us to guide us into truth. We can know the truth if we are sensitive to the Spirits teaching and guiding.

I Jn 5:20 "And we KNOW that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may KNOW him that is true, and we

are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. "

I Jn 4:6 "We are of God: he that KNOWeth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby KNOW we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

We also have the Spirit to give us assurance of our salvation. He is the down payment.

I Jn 4:13" Hereby KNOW we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

IV- Know We Will be like Him.

I Jn 3:2 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we KNOW that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

There are many areas that we do not know from God's Word. One of these is the discussion about what our new body will be like in the future. While we do not have many things clear here we have the assurance that we will be like Him. Not as we perceive Him but as, "**He is.**" We will be like Him in our perfection.

V- Know That He Can Take Away Our Sin.

I Jn 3:5 "And ye KNOW that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

Ps 32:1-2 "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

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Might I say that it takes clean water to clean a floor, you cannot clean a floor with dirty water. You cannot clean a dirty soul with a sin-cursed offering.

VI- Know That We Have Passed from Death to Life.

I Jn 3:14-15 "We KNOW that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye KNOW that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Again I remind us that one of the purposes of *I John* is that we might have assurance of our salvation. When we remember that the Word of God teaches us that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. (see *Eph 2:1,5*) We can know that are alive is that we have passed from death into life.

VII- Know He Hears Our Prayers.

I Jn 5:15 "And if we KNOW that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we KNOW that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

The knowledge that God hears our prayers is a comfort to us both in good times and bad. God is not a God that does not hear nor care but one who is a pray away.

Application to Life's Steps:

- 1- We can know that we saved before we die. Notice especially *I John 5:13*.
- 2- We know the Holy Spirit give assurance, truth and guidance.
- 3- The knowledge that we will be like Him is a comfort.
- 4- The fact He hears our prayers and petitions is an assurance for our walk in life.

Retracing our Steps:

- 1- Who wrote the books of I John?

- 2- What are the key words of I John?

- 3- What are the seven things given in our study that we can and need to know. List them below.

