

FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

Author & Audience:

the Apostle John, writing Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Asia Minor

Date:

anywhere from 70-90 C.E.

Purpose:

This letter widely addresses the threat imposed by proto-Gnostic errors encouraging antinomianism, during a period of transition in the *ekklesia* from Apostolic to post-Apostolic.

1

The Word of Life

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life—

² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and declare to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Yeshua the Messiah.

⁴ And these things we write, so that our joy may be made full.

God is Light

⁵ And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

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 is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Yeshua His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive 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.

2

Messiah Our Advocate

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Yeshua the Messiah the righteous;

² and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

³ And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

⁶ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same way as He walked.

The New Commandment

⁷ Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you were having from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

⁸ Again, a new commandment I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

⁹ The one who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

¹⁰ The one who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

¹¹ But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

¹² I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young people, because you have overcome the Evil One. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.

¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young people, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the Evil One.

¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

¹⁷ And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

The Antimesiah

¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antimesiah is coming, even now have many antimesiahs have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they*

went out, that they might be manifested that they all are not of us.

²⁰ And you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.

²¹ I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

²² Who is the liar but the one who denies that Yeshua is the Messiah? This is the antimesiah, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

²⁴ As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

²⁵ And this is the promise which He promised us: the eternal life.

²⁶ These things have I written to you concerning those deceiving you.

²⁷ And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is no lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in Him.

Children of God

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

²⁹ If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

3

¹ Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it does not know Him.

² Beloved, now are we children of God, and it has not yet manifested what we will be. We know that, when He appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him just as He is.

³ And everyone who has this hope *set* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

⁴ Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.^a

⁵ And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

⁶ Whoever abides in Him does not sin; whoever sins has not seen Him or knows Him.

⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

⁸ the one who practices sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sins from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the Devil.

⁹ Whoever is born of God does not practice sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the Devil are manifested: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother or sister.

Loving One Another

¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

¹² not as Cain, *who* was of the Evil One, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

¹³ Do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers and sisters. He who does not live abides in death.

¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers and sisters.

¹⁷ But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother or sister in need and closes his compassion from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or tongue, but in work and truth.

Confidence before God

¹⁹ By this we will know that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him,

²⁰ in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

²² and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

²³ And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Yeshua the Messiah, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

²⁴ And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He gave us.

4

The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Antimesiah

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Yeshua the Messiah has come in the flesh is from God;

³ and every spirit that does not confess Yeshua is not from God; and this is the *spirit* of the antimesiah, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

⁴ You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

⁵ They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.

⁶ We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

God is Love

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

^a The standard rendering of *anomia* as "lawlessness" is followed here; a Messianic version like the CJB has, "Everyone who keeps sinning is violating *Torah*—indeed, sin is violation of *Torah*."

⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

⁹ By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.

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.

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹² No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

¹⁴ And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Yeshua is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

¹⁶ And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us.

²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother or sister, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother or sister also.

5

Faith is Victory over the World

¹ Whoever believes that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of God; and whoever loves

the One who has begotten^a loves also the one who is born of Him.

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do His commandments.

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

⁵ And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Yeshua is the Son of God?

The Witness concerning the Son

⁶ This is the one who came by water and blood, Yeshua the Messiah; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

⁷ And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

⁸ For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood: and the three agree in one.

⁹ If we receive human witness, the witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son.

¹⁰ The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because He has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.

¹¹ And the witness is this, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

The Knowledge of Eternal Life

¹³ These things have I written to you, so that you may know that you have eternal life—to you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

¹⁴ And this is the confidence which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked of Him.

^a Grk. *tan gennēsanta*; "the one having given birth" (Brown and Comfort, 839); this is more commonly just rendered as "the Father."

¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother or sister committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not to *leading* death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not *leading* to death.

¹⁸ We know that anyone born of God does not sin; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the Evil One does not touch him.

¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in *the power of* the Evil One.

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God is come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Yeshua the Messiah. This is the true God and eternal life.

²¹ Little children, guard yourselves from idols.