

Lecture 20 – Introduction to I, II, III John

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11

Key Terms

Corrective purpose, constructive purpose, personal, assurance, tests of faith, eyewitness, Jesus the Savior, atonement

Lecture Objectives

- Describe and trace the main themes of the three letters of John
- Describe the probable historical situation of the first readers
- Identify parallels between first readers and readers today

Preliminary Questions

- How would you summarize the message of I, II, and III John? How would you describe its pastoral role in the lives of Christians based on your current understanding?

Introduction to I, II, III John

I. How are the Epistles of John Different from the Epistles of Paul?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. Sense of timelessness.

II. Keys to Reading John

A. Clue as to what prompted the letters (2:18-19):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. The Corrective purpose of John's letters

1. Description of those who left:

- a. A group in the church has seceded (2:18-19)
- b. Attempting to lead others astray (2:26)
- c. Warning about false prophets (4:1), antichrists (2:18, 4:1), deceivers (2 John 7).

2. False teachers promote anti-Christian ideas:

- a. The Christ has not come in the flesh
- b. Jesus is not the Christ
- c. It is possible to live a sin-free life

C. The Constructive purpose of I John (5:13)

1. To give assurance (I John 5:13)

- a. Why this goal is necessary
- b. Why the question of assurance

2. Soteric Status & Self Awareness (Are you saved and do you know it?)

Saved & Don't Know

Lost & Don't Know	Saved & Don't Know
Lost & Know it	Saved & Know it

3. The Purpose of the Church

- a. Comfort ...
- b. Afflict ...

D. Atmosphere of John's letters -- a personal treatise; note "children, dear children"

E. Authorship of I John -- technically anonymous, but evidence points to the apostle John

- 1. Author is eyewitness. (I John 1:1-3!)
- 2. Early church testimony generally agrees, though some ascribes letters to John the elder
- 3. Why is author "the elder" not "the apostle"?
 - a. In 90 AD John was old.
 - b. Elder also refers to ...

F. Summary and application:

- 1. Writing so that the church may know ...
- 2. Why are some reasons that people doubt their salvation?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
 - g. _____

3. I John's addition to the list:

III. Purpose of I John: To Give Assurance

A. How John gives certainty/assurance

- 1. Objective grounds
- 2. Subjective grounds

B. The errors John opposes

- 1. Difficulty with bodily life of Jesus
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
- 2. Denied ...
- 3. Denied ...
- 4. Denied (cf. 1) ...
- 5. Thinking that license is an option ...
- 6. Thinking that sinlessness is an option (texts) ...

C. The three tests of faith -- Passing these gives assurance

- 1. Moral test (2:3-6) ...
- 2. Social test (4:7-8) ...
- 3. Theological test:

- a. Jesus is (5:5) ...
- b. Jesus has (4:1-4) ...
- c. Jesus is (1:5-2:6) ...

IV. Developing Two Themes:

A. Eyewitness testimony to Christ (1:1-4)

- 1. Grammar -- perfect tense:
- 2. "Handling"
- 3. A vivid testimony (Aside on effete pictures of Jesus)

B. Jesus the Savior (1:5 - 2:6)

- 1. Theme: Blood of Christ cleanses sin progressively (5-10) and definitely (2:1-6)
- 2. We must confess
 - a. Sin:
 - b. Sins:
- 3. "Make God a liar": in three senses
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. Illustration about the atonement
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

C. The atonement

- 1. _____
 - a. If we sin, we have ...
 - b. Jesus is the ...
 - c. Review of terms under the umbrella of atonement:
 - 1) Propitiation (a sacrifice that removes or deals with the wrath of God)
 - 2) Justification:
 - 3) Redemption:
 - 4) Reconciliation:
 - 5) So why does John write all this?
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

V. 2-3 John

A. Similar style and themes

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

B. New practical problem: How to treat traveling Christian teachers

- 1. Why this is an issue?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
- 2. Second John says, "Do not welcome ..."
- 3. Third John says, "Do welcome ..."
- 4. Application