

I JOHN: DEFEATING MISLEADING SPIRITUAL ERROR TRULY TO COMMUNE WITH GOD
Part I: Understanding 1 John As God's COMPREHENSIVE Antidote To Misleading Spiritual Error
(1 John 1:1-4 With Its Historical Setting)

I. Introduction

- A. In our era, Islamic suicide bombers kill Jews and Christians, thinking they please God, an ABC television documentary suggests Jesus may have come by boat to France with Mary Magdalene and by her fathered children versus what the Bible teaches while some Evangelicals claim the Bible does not contain objective truth, cf. John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, p. 37-38!
- B. With such a powerful host of misleading religious views that we Christians face in today's world, we need a comprehensive antidote to spiritual error that answers our deepest heart needs, and 1 John is the answer:

II. Understanding 1 John As God's COMPREHENSIVE Antidote To Misleading Spiritual Error.

- A. 1 John along with its historical setting reveal the Apostle John wrote the letter, and that it was penned to counter a variety of misleading and spiritually destructive errors that Christians faced in his day:
1. First, the best and earliest evidence indicates the author of 1 John was the Apostle John:
 - a. 1 John 1:1-2 reveals its author was an eyewitness of Christ, and "Early Christian writers including Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian cited the epistle as John's," B.K.C., N. T., p. 881.
 - b. Then, the author is purposely not named in 1 John as is so in John's Gospel, Ibid., p. 881, 267.
 - c. Next, Church father, Polycarp (ca. A. D. 69-A. D. 155) mentioned he had been in contact with the Apostle John, and Irenaeus (ca. A. D. 130-A. D. 200) heard Polycarp and wrote that John who leaned on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper had written a Gospel while at Ephesus, Ibid., p. 267.
 - d. As John 21:20, 24 identifies the disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast as the author of John's Gospel, the earliest and best evidence points to the Apostle John as the author of John's Gospel and 1 John.
 2. Second, internal evidence of 1 John reveals the Apostle John likely wrote against an *assortment* of powerful and misleading and spiritually destructive errors that Christians faced in his era:
 - a. 1 John 2:18, 26 with 4:1-4 report many false teachers in the world were trying to mislead Christians.
 - b. Some hold these teachers were Gnostics (Ibid., p. 881) who claimed (a) knowledge was superior to virtue, (b) the non literal sense of Scripture is correct and known by a few, (c) God did not create the world since it has evil, (d) deity can not combine with the physical universe, meaning Christ is not God and (e) there is no physical resurrection of the body, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., p. 1770.
 - c. Others say John battled Docetism (belief Jesus seemed to have a body), Ibid., B.K.C., N.T., p. 881.
 - d. Early Church tradition held 1 John was penned to counter Cerinthus who taught Jesus was a man on whom "the divine Christ descended . . . at His baptism and left Him before the Crucifixion," Ibid.
 - e. Zane Hodges suggests 1 John 2:19 might teach since the false teachers went out from "us," i.e., from the Apostles (versus the "you" of 2:20-21), the false teachers were Judaeen apostates, Ibid., p. 891.
 - f. However, since the secular world in John's era was full of false pagan religions, "it is likely that the readers [of 1 John] were confronted by a **variety** of ideas," Ibid., p. 881 (emphases ours).
- B. Regardless what kind of error they faced, John wrote so his readers would know the certainty of the truth about God and relating to Him so they could genuinely commune with God to their full joy, 1 J ohn 1:1-4:
1. John asserted that (a) Jesus came in a **physical body** (b) from the Father (c) as His "message about Life," (d) which Incarnation was **verified** to be *historically factual* by the Apostles' **senses** of sight and touch. (e) As John asserts the Incarnation was **verified** to be *factual* this way, he implies God intends to **relate** to **man** via **simple logic** and the **normal, literal sense**, 1 Jn. 1:1-2; Ibid., B.K.C., N.T., p. 883.
 2. John thus held he penned 1 John so its Christian readers might know how to enjoy **real** fellowship with the Apostles, one that also includes **God** and **Jesus**, His **coequal** ("*huios*") Son, 1:3a, b; John 5:17-18.
 3. Through such an **actual** spiritual fellowship, John's readers would have their joy made full, 1 John 1:4.

Lesson Application: Opposite claims by all other sources to the contrary, Jesus of Nazareth, God's "message of Life", is God come in the flesh as has been verified as FACTUAL by way of the senses of Jesus' twelve Apostles. Thus, the Apostles TRULY fellowshiped with God so that if the reader heeds 1 John's words on that fellowship using simple logic and the normal, literal sense, he will gain fullness of joy in his own fellowship with God and with His coequal, fully divine Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.