



1–3 JOHN; JUDE

1–3 JOHN: DISCIPLESHIP LIVED BY LOVE

JUDE: WARNINGS AND EXHORTATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

John's epistles are placed as the second to last of the Epistles, longest to shortest.¹ First, second, and third John do not include an author's name, but in the latter two, the author introduces himself as "the Elder"/ *presbuteros*. All three books share vocabulary, themes, and style with the Gospel of John (which also never introduces the author by name).² By 215 AD, the authorship of 1 John was accepted by the eastern and western Christian churches as John the Beloved.³ However, debate over the authorship and dating of all three Epistles continues.⁴ I will avoid that arena here, and focus on how we can understand and apply them as scripture.

Themes

John's Epistles continue with the same themes we find in the Gospel of John: light, darkness, truth, love, and the name of the Lord. Only 1 John has the length to develop these themes. He builds mainly on ideas presented during Jesus' Last Supper. He develops them into a poetic sermon more than a letter. John writes to all saints and calls them, "children."

THE EPISTLE OF 1 JOHN

Organization

The prologue speaks of John's physical contact with the resurrected Lord, repeated five times. He then introduces his two main points. First, "the message we have . . . God is light." Two chapters later, he repeats the phrase, "the message that . . ." and goes on to teach God is love, and "we should love one another." He ends with his testimony, "we know," repeating three key points.

Outline

- 1:1–4 Prologue
- 1:5–3:10 The Message of Light
 - Warning against Antichrists
 - Children of God Will Become Like God
- 3:11–5:12 The Message of Love
 - Love One Another to Abide in God's Love
- 5:13–21 Conclusion

1 JOHN 1

Prologue: The Word of Life

1 John 1:1–4

1 John 1:1: "*Brethren, this is the testimony which we give of that which was from the beginning . . .*" (JST *italicized*) The Prophet Joseph's addition sounds similar to his words in D&C 76:22 "after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him . . ." which interestingly, Joseph received while translating the Gospel of John 5:29. I presume the words in the JST reflect the words that John wrote.⁵ This is the only JST change in this chapter.

Similar to John's Gospel, this prologue emphasizes the "beginning," "Word," and "life." As discussed earlier, three of the four Gospels also open with the same words as Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning" (also Mark 1:1, Luke 1:3;

John 1:1). The New Testament authors knew their Old Testament scriptures, and built their own writings after the pattern as another witness of God's words. They also wrote to testify that Jesus fulfilled the old law as the Promised Messiah, making a new law.

“which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we have looked at and our hands have touched—
this we proclaim concerning the Word of life” (NIV)

The Epistle or sermon is written in poetic parallels. By comparing the wording with the Gospel of John, we can see where the author introduces new ideas. For example, here in the Epistle, he emphasizes the physical nature of Jesus' resurrected body (also see 1 John 4:3). It was probably in response to the growing problem of Gnosticism, which taught the Greek philosophy that all things physical were evil and the spirit alone was ultimately good. John points out that he (and others, “we”) saw and touched the of the *body* resurrected Lord. The “we” may refer to other members of the Twelve as “a special witness of the name of Christ” (D&C 107:23, 26). John refers to Jesus as the “Word of Life” with a body (as Paul did in Philippians 2:16). John uses the same Greek word, “*logos*” from his Gospel prologue. Here though, he wants to emphasize Jesus as “life,” meaning Eternal Life. Earlier Jesus taught, “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life” (John 5:24, NIV).

1 John 1:2 “The Life was manifested, and we have seen, and do testify, and declare to you the Life . . .” Five times in the prologue alone, John mentions that Jesus was seen and handled (Five was an important Hebrew number representing the “five books of the law” or Pentateuch). Also, it can mean that Jesus' words bring us hope and life, even an abundant life here and afterwards.

1 John 1:3 “We have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son” (NIV) This “life was revealed” (ISV) to John includes a relationship with both God the Father and His Son. For here on earth, Joseph Fielding Smith added the companionship of the Spirit into this hope: “If we are in fellowship with this Spirit, then we walk in the light and have fellowship with God.”⁶ I also believe that we can feel the fellowship with the Spirit powerfully when we taste of God's mercy or forgiveness. The word “fellowship/*koinóni*” literally means partnership, and can also refer to “contributory help, participation, sharing in, communion, spiritual fellowship.”⁷ Inherent in Christian fellowship is the responsibility of sharing our livelihood with those in need (Acts 2:44–45).

1 John 1:4 “These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” Most other English versions other than the KJV express that John teaches this “to make our joy complete” (NIV). The Book of Mormon also referred to the eternal consequence of joy when Jacob taught “men are that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

1. THE MESSAGE OF LIGHT

1 John 1:5–3:10

Light and Darkness: Sin and Forgiveness

1 John 1:5–2:2

1 John 1:5 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” John introduces the first section of his sermon: God as light. Light was also one of the major themes of John’s Gospel (John 1:4–9; 3:19–21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9–10; 12:35–36, 46; also see D&C 50:23–24; 88:67–68). Many levels of meanings can be found in the phrase, “God is light.” Light is energy, reason, color, heat, food, and inspiration. Light fuels life and feeds our spirits. Light inspires art and science. Light holds the secrets of the universe. Light is threaded into modern technologies and electricity. A Stanford professor of science, Markus Covert, shed a deeper level of significance to this concept:

When I think ‘God is light’ I think: light is everything! Light is gorgeous! It is beautiful! It is mysterious! We don’t even know if it is a wave or a particle—probably neither! It’s eternal! Who would dare to say where it came from or where it’s going? It is the fastest thing in the universe, 300,000,000 meters per second without breaking a sweat. It warms us! It feeds us (From the sun to the photosynthetic plants to the rest of the animal kingdom)! It comforts us (triggering serotonin release and sensing by our brain cells). It protects us (vitamin D). Our bodies have all kinds of ways to harvest light, but the most spec-

Artist’s concept of galaxy WISE J224607.57-052635.0. Image via NASA.gov

A detailed artist's concept of a galaxy, showing a bright, glowing core surrounded by a complex, multi-colored structure of dust and gas. The colors range from deep reds and oranges to bright yellows and whites, with some blue and purple hues. The galaxy is set against a dark, star-filled background.

tacular is the ocular—our eyes are absolutely amazing in what we can perceive, and yet so much of the light around us is completely undetectable or only with advanced technology. It's completely amazing!

More than an image to describe God, I think God and light have a literal connection (D&C 88:7). This description of God is completely different than that of the Greco-Roman gods. John worships a perfect being.

1 John 1:6 “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” In order to enter into fellowship with God we must live our lives in accordance with the “light of Christ.” Moroni 7:18–19 describes the “light of Christ” similar to a conscience: “the light by which ye may judge . . . that ye may know good from evil.” I see it as the rudimentary work of the Spirit that is given to everyone to learn how to “hold upon every good thing” (Alma 28:14). When we walk in the light, we walk with our Savior, as He is the “light of the world” (John 8:12; 9:5).

1 John 1: 7 “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sins” (NIV) Fellowship includes serving and loving our neighbor (i.e. *all* that cross our path). Interesting, John calls for fellowship with God first and then with our neighbors. The order is significant, just like the Old Testament two great commandments—Love God and Love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:28–31). It is easier to love others when we feel God's love.

We also walk with God when we walk in harmony with one another. We walk in harmony with God, vicariously, when we help others in need. To walk in God's light allows us to see others in God's light. When we have a hard time getting along with someone, use God's light to see him/her as He does. If we humbly acknowledge our own weaknesses, then it is easier to endure them in others. We are all in need of the cleansing light of our Savior.

1 John 1:8–10 “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us” If we confess and repent of our sins, Christ's atoning sacrifice has the power to cleanse us through the workings of the Holy Spirit. Even though we do not believe we are depraved because of Adam's transgression, we mortals all sin and need to repent daily.⁸ The best “weapon against sin is its recognition and a dependence on the redemption wrought by Jesus.”⁹

Paul and other New Testament authors taught the need as well (also see Romans 3:23). Yet the Book of Mormon includes the word repent six times more often than the New Testament and the D&C three times more often. It is obviously a message for our day. President Russell M. Nelson taught in April 2019 Conference:

Too many people consider repentance as punishment—something to be avoided except in the most serious circumstances. But this feeling of being penalized is engendered by Satan. He tries to block us

from looking to Jesus Christ, who stands with open arms, hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us.¹⁰

Satan's false propaganda distorts the blessings of repentance. Humble confession brings great blessings.

1 JOHN 2

1 John 2:1 “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin” (NIV). John is the only author to use “*teknion*/little child” in the New Testament (once in his Gospel, seven times in this Epistle). It was also used for “someone *deeply loved*.”¹¹ Outside of the New Testament, the term of endearment is used for disciples by their masters. John explains that the purpose of his Epistle is to persuade his readers to “sin not.” His Epistle is filled with more information on sin.

But if any man sin *and repent*, we have an advocate with the Father” (JST). The JST addition of “repent” is doctrinally significant. In modern revelation, the Savior further explains that He will intervene if we “repent,” otherwise, “if they would not repent they must suffer even as I” (D&C 19:17). The word for “advocate”/*paraklétos* can also mean “intercessor, a consoler, helper, and Paraclete.” In the entire Bible, Jesus’ role as an “advocate” is mentioned only here, but we find it five times in the D&C. For example:

Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him—Saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified; Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life (D&C 45:3–5).

The Lord’s title of “Advocate” was a favorite of John’s. He mentions it five times (four times in his Gospel as *paraklétos*/“comforter,” John 14:16, 26; 15:26, 16:7).¹² This dual definition is consistent with D&C 88:3, and Joseph Smith’s teachings that define the Second Comforter as a visitation of the Savior.

Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.¹³



Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection by Alexander Andreyevich Ivanov, 1835. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

1 John 2:2 “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (NIV) Christ appeased the demands of justice through His “atoning sacrifice”/ *hilasmos* (NIV), as a remedy (NEB), expiation (RSV) or “propitiation” of an angry God (KJV). The Book of Mormon taught that Jesus’ atonement would become the “great and last sacrifice;” the Lamb of God sacrificed Himself for the world’s sins through His death (Alma 34:10). An interesting definition of the root of atonement is described by Hugh Nibley,

The basic word for atonement is *kaphar*, which has the same basic meaning in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic, that being ‘to bend, arch over, cover; . . . to deny, . . . to forgive, . . . to be expiated, . . . renounce.’ The Arabic *kafara* puts the emphasis on a tight squeeze, such as tucking in the skirts, drawing a thing close to one’s self. Closely related are Aramaic and Arabic *kafat*, meaning a close embrace, which are certainly related to the Egyptian *hpet*, the common ritual embrace written with the ideogram of embracing arms. . . . Most interesting is the Arabic *kafata*, as it is the key to a dramatic situation. It was the custom

for one fleeing for his life in the desert to seek protection in the tent of a great sheik, crying out . . . “I am thy suppliant,” whereupon the Lord would place the hem of his robe over the guest’s shoulder and declare him under his protection.¹⁴

We see this image in the Book of Mormon, too (see 2 Nephi 1:15; 4:33; Alma 5:24).

Keeping the Commandments

1 John 2:3–11

1 John 2:3 “We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands” (NIV) At His Last Supper, the Savior taught to *know God* is to have Eternal Life (John 17:3). This type of knowledge will result from obedience to His commandments and having a pure heart and desires. Knowing God can only happen in obedience to His truths and light. In Semitic thought, “knowledge implies intimacy.”¹⁵ That closeness with God comes from closely following His commandments so that we can become like Him.



The Last Supper by Hans Holbein, 1525. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

1 John 2:4–6 “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar . . . whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected” John emphasizes the importance of *doing* the word of God (as did James 2:7). If our actions are not consistent with our faith, do we really believe? Those sinners bound by addictions can overcome by doing all they can, and then strengthening their faith and love of God. We must live the teachings of the Lord to claim complete conversion.

1 John 2:7–8 “I write a new commandment unto you, but *it is the same* commandment which ye had from the beginning” (JST) Jesus taught the new commandment at his Last Supper. This is the test of discipleship—to love as Jesus loved (John 15:12). The phrase “from the beginning” may refer to the fact that Adam even had these commandments, or to the beginning of Christ’s example from the beginning of His ministry.

1 John 2:9–11 “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light” (NIV) As we demonstrate Christ-like love, we will

receive and reflect the same light Christ possesses. We must live the gospel to receive its light. But studying these ideas, new windows of light are opened to help disciples forgive and love with God's love. John also teaches that hatred causes darkness so that we cannot see where we are going.

1 John 2:12–14 “I write unto you . . .” John poetically creates a double message to three groups (citing the NIV):

Children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

Fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

Young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

Children, because you know the Father.

Fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

Young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

John's acknowledgement of little children's purity is a dramatic departure from his culture (and sadly the direction that later Christianity adopted). Yet, restored scripture adds a second witness that children are whole, saved through the atonement, and do not need baptism (Moroni 8:9–14; Mosiah 3:16). John addresses different groups in his audience to get everyone's attention. The absence of women in this list is not a sure sign that women were not included in his audience, as several times John uses the word, *adelphos*/"member of the same religious community, especially a fellow-Christian," which the NIV translates as "brothers and sisters" three times (1 John 3:13, 15, 16).

Warning against Worldliness

1 John 2:15–17

1 John 2:15–16 “Love not the world, neither the things that *are* of the world . . . For all in the world, *that is of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father*” (JST) The Prophet Joseph was inspired in his JST to distinguish that “in the world” can be different than “of the world,” which “is of the lusts.” Note the prominent place of lust and pride in the scheme of the world. Disciples must repel worldliness (D&C 84:50–53) and replace a love of self and materialism with service and generosity. Loving materialism more than consecration, sports more than God's Sabbath, and your will more than God's will are diametrically opposed to loving God. We “cannot serve God and Mammon” (Matthew 6:24; 3 Nephi 13:24). What does that say of our culture?

1 John 2:17 “The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever” (NIV) John describes the opposite of those in the world, as those who “*do the will of God*” (GNT). When you think of the great reward, it helps keep the requirements in perspective. We give so little to receive so much. Keep an eternal

perspective. Our lovely earth, which has been around for billions of years will pass away (at least as we know it), but humanity, who now live usually less than a century, will live forever!

Warning Against Antichrists

1 John 2:18-27

1 John 2:18 “Dear children, this is the last hour . . . even now many antichrists have come . . . but their going showed that none of them belonged to us” (NIV) The last hour or “last time” (KJV) is not how we define the “last days.” John prophesied of the great apostasy, not the end of the world. John’s “antichrists” included members of the church, who “went out from us” (KJV). John doubts that they were ever really converted. He defines an antichrist in verse 22 as one who denies Jesus as the Promised Messiah. Antichrists work for the devil and drove the apostasy. Corruption had already entered into the Lord’s church in John’s time.

The Book of Mormon also refers to antichrists in the form of Sherem (Jacob 7), Nehor (Alma 1), and Korihor (Alma 30), to name a few. Their arguments are similar to those used today. We, too, can see antichrists who try to stop the work of the Restoration, or cause contention within.

1 John 2:20 “you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things” (NKJV) The KJV, “unction” means “anointed,” (RSV), or “are among the initiated” (NEB). The same word is used to mean “inaugural ceremony for priests” and we find it in 1 John 2:27. John writes to those who knew the sacred ordinations and probably the temple ordinances. He speaks to those saints who are endowed with the power of God.

1 John 2:21–23 “I have not written to you because you lack knowledge of the truth, but because you have it . . . [But] the antichrist . . . denies the Father and the Son” (BSB) John writes to believers who trust in the truth. They should have, and use, the gift of the Spirit to discern truth from error. An important use of discernment is to recognize an antichrist as someone who denies the roles of God the Father and His Son Jesus the Christ.

The *italicized* words in verse 23 of the KJV do not appear in the Greek manuscripts, but were added to the Latin translation. John may refer to the difference between being able to enjoy the presence of the Son in the Terrestrial Kingdom, and the Father in the Celestial Kingdom (see D&C 76:70–79).

1 John 2:24–26 “. . . remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—eternal life” (NIV) In the Restoration we define “Eternal life” as exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom with God the Father.¹⁶ This separation of “immortality” and “Eternal Life” and of kingdoms is unique among Christians (Moses 1:39). This was to clarify those who tried to deceive the saints.

1 John 2:27 “the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you . . . remain in Him” (NIV) John refers to this anointing as if it were available for all disciples, not just our “revelator,” an anointed prophet who speaks for Christ (D&C 124:125). This is the second time he reminds them that their “anointing”/“unction”/*chrisma* has the power to teach them “all things” (1 John 2:20, KJV). I presume this refers to all things required for exaltation. Consecrated disciples can be taught by the Spirit when they do nothing to offend the Spirit. Also Donald Parry taught:

Anointed individuals potentially acquired several heavenly boons. For instance, persons who received the anointing were protected by God (1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalm 105:15; 89:20–23; D&C 121:16), were taught from on high (1 John 2:27), and gained salvation (Psalm 20:6; 28:8; D&C 109:80). In addition, the Lord showed mercy to his anointed (2 Samuel 22:51; Psalm 18:50). Similarly, it was forbidden for souls to speak out against the anointed of the Lord (1 Samuel 24:6, 10; 26:9, 11, 23; 2 Samuel 19:21).¹⁷

Kelly Ogden explains this anointing is the gift of the Holy Ghost.¹⁸ Joseph Smith also emphasized the premier role that the Holy Spirit played in the church. To Joseph, the Holy Spirit is the great revelator and reveals God’s will to His children and shows them what they should do.

However, the verse here sounds like an anointing with oil, which is not the confirmation but an additional gift. Temple washings and anointings signify being cleansed and sanctified through Christ. John may have referred to these promises as the means to learn and hear truth (D&C 88:74).



Samuel Anoints Saul by Anton Robert Leinweber, 1910.

Children of God Will Become Like God

1 John 2:28–3:3

1 John 2:28–29 “Dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming . . . everyone who does what is right has been born of him” (NIV) John again uses “little children”/*teknion* endearingly, as a teacher would. He also defines “born of Him” as one who does “righteousness.” His encouragement to gain confidence in the Lord, to be worthy of being called a child of God, was also the topic of a General Conference talk by Elder Jörg Klebingat:

Do you have a personal witness that your current offering as a Latter-day Saint is sufficient to inherit eternal life? Can you say within yourself that Heavenly Father is pleased with you? What thoughts come to mind if you had a personal interview with your Savior one minute from now? . . . Yours is the privilege, if you want it, to come to know for yourself, today or soon, that you are pleasing God in spite of your shortcomings. . . . I testify of a loving Savior who rejoices when we apply His Atonement daily with the calm and happy assurance that we are facing in the right direction. I testify of a loving Savior who is anxious for your “confidence [to] wax strong in the presence of God” (D&C 121:45).¹⁹

1 JOHN 3

1 John 3:1–2 “What love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God—and we are! . . . We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is” (BLB) From the New Testament perspective, we become “children of God” when we live worthy of that title. (John the Baptist also taught this about claiming to be children of Abraham without the works of Abraham, Matthew 3:7–10). Yet, John’s audience has become just that. They do not fully comprehend what being a child of God entails. This amazing potential, including to “see him as he is,” can only come thanks to our Savior’s at-one-ment.

1 John 3:3 “This hope makes us keep ourselves holy” (CEV) The hope of purification should motivate us to become more like Christ. Becoming holy is the best preparation for becoming like Him. This is done as we repent of our sins—or repent of violating God’s law—and come to Him for cleansing.

Avoiding Sin

1 John 3:4–10

1 John 3:4–6 “Sin is the transgression of the law . . . He was manifested to take away our sins . . . Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever *continueth in sin* hath not seen him, neither known him” (JST italicized). John’s argument is built on two facts: sin exists, and we need a Redeemer to cleanse our sins. We only “abide” in our sins when we do not repent. When we abide with our Savior, we have repented and He has purified us. With this basis, John explains that we know God only when we return our allegiance to our Savior and live His laws. The JST points to the problem of “continuing to sin,” (and then repeats the correction in verses 8 and 9). This word choice was also chosen by the NIV which translates it: “continue to sin.”

1 John 3:7–8 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous . . . He that *continueth in sin* is of the devil” (JST italicized). The JST changes the Calvinistic thought of God predestining humans to do evil. John, like James, calls the saints to demonstrate their beliefs with action. God can have no incongruity. If we come unto Him through regular repentance, then we are honored as His children. That is how

“the child of God is marked by freedom from sin, [and] the child of the devil is marked by sin.”²⁰

1 John 3:9 “Whosoever is born of God doth not *continueth in sin*; for *the Spirit of God remaineth in him*: and he cannot *continue in sin*, because he is born of God, *having received that holy Spirit of promise*.” For the third time in this chapter, the JST makes an important doctrinal clarification by adding “continueth.” Most other modern English translations also change the meaning to refer to “practices sin” (NASB) or “continue to sin” (NIV). This acknowledges the human propensity to sin, but leaves room for repentance and a change of our hearts and behaviors. Spiritual rebirth motivates us to forsake sin. Satan rebelled against God premortally and was removed from the presence of God, but Satan came to earth to tempt man (Moses 4:1–4 and Abraham 3:24–28). Both in his Gospel and Epistles, John repeatedly defines a spiritual birth (John 1:13; 3:3–7; 1 John 2:29; 4:4, 5:1, 4, 18).

The Holy Spirit of Promise has special meaning in restored scripture, which refers to the Spirit’s ability to ratify ordinances and seal them conditionally or prenatally (see commentary from Ephesians 1:13; D&C 76:53; 88:3–5; 124:124; 131:5, 7, 18, 19, 26).²¹

1 John 3:10 “This is how we know who the children of God . . . Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister” (NIV) John loves opposites and often illustrates the image of right and wrong or light and darkness. The Epistle has no middle ground or “gray.”

2. THE MESSAGE OF LOVE

1 John 3:11–24

1 John 3:11–12 “This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain . . .” John returns to his key message, and the Lord’s message from the beginning: Love (1 John 2:10; 5:2; John 13:35; 15:12). This was also the message given to the Children of Israel through Moses (Deuteronomy 19:18). Yet, learning to love as Christ loves is the basis of God’s higher law. Looking back in biblical history, the first story of hatred, or the antithesis of love, was Cain’s selfish behavior and murder of his brother (Genesis 4:8). This was a New Testament favorite as the same story is also remembered in Hebrews 11:4 and Jude 1:11.

1 John 3:13 “Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you” (NIV) John warns his fellow saints that the world lives under the influence of Satan, hence it hates followers of God.

1 John 3:14–15 “Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer” (NIV) In a spiritual sense, John teaches that we are dead, or not “born again,” unless our hearts have been

permeated by a love for God and our fellow beings. In the higher law that Jesus taught at the Sermon on the Mount, He warned about the power of thoughts; “Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment” (Matthew 5:22, JST). Selfless divine love is a sign of overcoming the kingdom of the devil.

1 John 3:16–18 Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters . . . let us not love with words or speech but with actions” (NIV) The ultimate testimony of love comes when we give and live our lives for others as Jesus did. John gives examples on how we can do this—giving to the poor in need and offering compassion. More than offering words, real love must be enacted. God demonstrated it, and so must we.

1 John 3:19–21 “by this we will know that we belong to the truth, and will assure our hearts in His presence . . . if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God” (BSB) If we feel and demonstrate Christ-like love by giving to our neighbors, then our hearts will not condemn us. Our own hearts, or conscience, knows what is right and wrong and whether we are filled with love or selfishness. The Spirit knows our thoughts and is the judge (which, in scripture, is called the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of God as well as the light of Christ).²² The Book of Mormon affirms, “the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:16, 19; see also 2 Nephi 2:5; Helaman 14:31). Because all responsible humans received this gift, all people know whether they are right with God, unless they have denied the voice to the point that they are “past feeling” (1 Nephi 17:45; Moroni 9:20).

1 John 3:22 “Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (NKJV) Just as in the Epistle of James 1:5, John also encourages disciples to ask God for help. The Lord added a qualifier to the Prophet Joseph Smith; we must only ask if it is right, or “that is expedient for you” (D&C 88:65). Otherwise, we get what we ask for, which is wrong, as Joseph Smith did with the 116 pages of the Book of Lehi.²³

John teaches another interesting point here. The more righteous a person is, the easier it is to receive communication from heavenly sources. This is true most of the time, I presume, but even Joseph Smith felt unheard in Liberty Jail, and Job did not get the answer he desired when he asked. That said, I do think there is a great secret in gaining answers to prayers by being obedient to the Lord’s commandments. Furthermore, by keeping the Lord’s commandments, we will usually not ask amiss. Yet, there are times when all need to say, “Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

1 John 3:23 “this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another” (NKJV) Just as in the Gospel of John, this verse emphasizes the importance of the “name” of Jesus. There is power in the name—evil spirits can be cast out, miracles can be performed, and the Spirit may come when we call on His Name. (Think of how we are told to cast out evil spirits, or administer, or baptize.)

The Book of Mormon often speaks of the importance of the “Name of Christ.” For example:

- **Mosiah 5:9** “Whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ” (also Mosiah 5:8).
- **Mosiah 26:24** “For behold, in my name are they called; and if they know me they shall come forth, and shall have a place eternally at my right hand.”
- **Alma 5:38** “the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you.”
- **Alma 5:48** “[Jesus will] take away the sins of the world, yea, the sins of every man who steadfastly believeth on his name” (also Alma 9:27; 11:40; Helaman 14:2).
- **3 Nephi 27:5–6** “For by this name shall ye be called at the last day; And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day.”

Elder Oaks spoke and wrote on this: “our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ affirms our commitment to do all that we can to be counted among those whom he will choose to stand at his right hand and be called by his name at the last day.”²⁴

1 John 3:24 “The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us” (NASB) When we keep the commandments of God, we receive that wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. In the KJV, “dwelleth” is from the Greek word for, “remains, abides.” This verse helps us understand John’s imagery of the Godhead, too. If we abide in God and God in us, then we can understand how Jesus abides in God.

I JOHN 4

Try the Spirit: Truth or Deceit

1 John 4:1–6

1 John 4:1 “Beloved” John uses “Beloved”/ *agapétos* as an endearment ten times in his Epistles.²⁵ (We find it 61 times in the New Testament spread across every author.)

“do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God” (NKJV) In the pre-mortal realms, we believe Lucifer fought against God’s plan and one third of the heavenly spirits chose to follow him (Moses 4:1–3; D&C 29:36–37; 76:25–38). These devils promote evil and will never receive a body (D&C 10:20–23, 27; 93:39). Their eternal progression stopped and they became devils. Jesus, Luke, Peter, Paul and John all describe false spirits working through false prophets or teachers already functioning during their times (Matthew 24:24; Acts 13:6; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 2 Peter 2:1).

This same call to “try the spirits” (KJV) came in the Restoration during the Second Great Awakening. It was a favorite topic of the Prophet Joseph’s according to Elder George A. Smith of the Quorum of the Twelve (and the prophet’s cousin), “There was no point upon which the Prophet Joseph dwelt more than the discerning of Spirits.”²⁶ We, too, must “try the spirits” by checking the sources of our research, praying for warnings, following God’s messengers, and being aware of Satan’s deceptions.

“many false prophets are gone out into the world” The next four verses form a chiastic structure with this:²⁷

- A False prophets have gone into the world (1 John 4:1d)
- B The Spirit of God (1 John 4:2a)
- C Everyone who confesses Jesus . . . reflects the Spirit that belongs to God (1 John 4:2bc)
- C’ Everyone who negates Jesus reflects a spirit that does not belong to God (1 John 4:3ab)
- B’ The spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:3c)
- A’ The spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:3c)

1 John 4:2 “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not . . . is the spirit of the antichrist” (NIV) This is the first of three ways that John offers to know if a spirit is of God or Satan (also in verses 6 and 7). Disciples must ask an important test of truth: Does the spirit or person testify that Jesus is the Christ/Messiah and came in the flesh as our God? Moroni 7:24 teaches how to test spirits: “All things which are good cometh of Christ” (also Omni 1:25). John gives three keys to know if a spirit is of God—vs. 2, 6, 7.

1 John 4:3 “This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which . . . is now already in the world” (NKJV) False teachers of *docetism* taught that Jesus was not really a “human” who lived to suffer and die.²⁸ Some taught that the divine Messiah or Christ joined the “man Jesus” at baptism and then departed from him just before his death. Others taught that the eternal Messiah really didn’t come in contact with temporal matter as that would have desecrated His divinity. These Greek philosophical arguments are laced with Gnosticism, which believed that only the spirit is perfect (that everything physical is bad and part of our punishment here on earth). They taught that salvation did not undertake to deliver mortals from sin and guilt, but rather it freed their spirit from contaminating matter.²⁹ We face other antichrists now—humanism, materialism, skepticism, secularism, rationalism, and agnosticism, to name a few.

1 John 4:4 “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” Those “of God” who enjoy the Spirit of the Lord have greater power than the devils. Thus, we can overcome the world with Christ’s help. Be careful with whom are the “he’s” in this verse.

The Anchor translation of this verse begins, “As for you, *Little Children, you belong in God*” giving it a sense of children’s innocence (D&C 93:38).³⁰

1 John 4:5–6 “They are of the world . . . We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. That is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception” (BSB) In this context “the world,” or worldliness, includes everything that is under Satan’s domain. John describes the saints as coming from God. That entails our need to serve Him. He also offers a second key to identify false prophets—they will not listen to “us” or God’s apostles and prophets. Likewise, if we receive God’s message and messengers, then we are on the right track. However, if someone does not receive truth, then they have the spirit of error “or falsehood” (NIV).

Loving One Another to Abide in God’s Love

1 John 4:7–21

1 John 4:7–8 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God . . . Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (NIV) John gives a third key to detect false prophets—whether or not they love one another. Moroni 7:48 also teaches that if we love each other we show our love for God (also Mosiah 3:19; Mormon 3:12). We can identify the wicked by asking, do they love their neighbor? The pure love of Christ, or *agapá* / “charity,” seems to be the essence of God’s character. Thus, to become like Him, disciples must seek this gift of charity, too. Paul and Mormon call charity the greatest spiritual gift that God gives His children (1 Corinthians 13:13; Moroni 7:46). John uses the perfect tense of the verb when describing being born of God, “has been [and remains] begotten”³¹ which happens through the sealing of the Holy Spirit of Promise” (JST 1 John 3:9).

1 John 4:9–10 “This is how God’s love was revealed . . . not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” The clearest and most wonderful example of God’s love is the gift of His Son as our Savior and Redeemer. (The word order in Greek stresses the object as the “only begotten.”)³²

Two more words play an important part to the text. The KJV uses “propitiation,” but the Greek *hilasmos* / “atoning sacrifice” is used by many modern English translations. Throughout this entire Epistle, John uses “love” / *agape* which is Paul’s “charity,” or “the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 4:47).

1 John 4:11 “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” God requires us to share His gift with others. If you don’t feel love for someone, pray to see people as God sees them. Ask the Lord to bless you with an understanding of His love for that person. Sometimes we mix up counterfeit forms of love—pleasure, praise, power, or even sex. But, if these are used for self-serving enjoyment-based emotions, they are not what John refers to as God’s unconditional love. He wants us to go beyond lust and self-aggrandizement, to selfless service and absolute deep caring for each other. The Lord’s example of love requires an eternal perspective.

1 John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time, except them who believe. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us” (JST) The first phrase of this verse seems out of place as it reads in the KJV. When a portion of the text does not flow, scholars’ question if it were original to the text. The important JST correction opens the way for the biblical examples of the five hundred who saw the resurrected Lord (1 Corinthians 15:6) and many more. Two verses later, John says he has seen God, too! Many believers have seen God before and after His resurrection.³³

In the Gospel of John and other places in this Epistle, we find the same message as the JST. For example: “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God” (John 6:46; also 1 John 3:6; 4:14). The Lord also told Joseph that He wanted believers to strive to see the Lord in D&C 93:1 “every soul who forsaketh his sins, and cometh unto me . . . and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am” (also see Genesis 32:30; Exodus 33:11; Isaiah 6; D&C 76:7; etc.). The Book of Mormon mentions several different groups of “other sheep,” that also saw or will see the resurrected Christ (3 Nephi 16:1).

1 John 4:13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit” (NIV) Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is one way that God abides in us. If you want to know if you are living in accordance to Jesus’ will, determine if you feel the Spirit of God. If you do, He abides in you.

1 John 4:14 “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son” (NIV) John bears his testimony that he has “seen” enough to know that the Father sent His Son. This sounds like our living apostles bearing testimony.

1 John 4:15–16 “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and . . . dwelleth in love” John lists two conditions as evidence of when God abides in us: 1) We believe in Jesus’ supreme act of atoning love, and 2) We are filled with God’s divine love/*agapa*/charity.

1 John 4:16b–18 “God is love . . . Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love” (NIV) This type of love gives us “confidence on the day of judgment” (1 John 4:17, NIV).³⁴ It has no strains of arrogance, because it comes from God. When we can trust God’s perfect love, we need not fear what the world or humans can do to us. Trusting in God’s love may give us the courage to really love one another unconditionally, too. Fear is a tool of the devil. We need to be careful and wise in our judgments, but we can move forward without fear as long as we walk on the path that God prepared for us, or figuratively, “walk where Jesus walked.”

1 John 4:19 “We love him, because he first loved us” This verse rings of our premortal existence where we lived

in a heavenly parental relationship. To some tiny degree, God gives parents the gift of unconditional love toward their children—but it must be fostered for it to survive and grow into charity.

1 John 4:20–21 “Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar . . . Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister” (NIV) These verses repeat John’s theme, that when we are filled with God’s love, it will spill over to our feelings for others. The corollary suggests that when we have unkind feelings toward another, we need to pray to understand God’s love better so that we can share it with those with whom we have hard feelings. This wonderful theme runs through much of John’s writings. We also find it clearly taught across other scripture as well (Mosiah 23:15; Leviticus 19:18; D&C 88:133; etc.).

1 JOHN 5

Overcoming the World

1 John 5:1–5

1 John 5:1 “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him” (NASB) This is a continuation of the theme discussed earlier of being born of God (i.e. 1 John 3:9; 4:7; etc.). Yet, John gives us more and more details on what it means to be “born of God.” The new twist in this section brings in the Father. If we love God the Father, we must love his Son, as they are inseparable.

1 John 5:2–3 “We know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments . . . His commandments are not burdensome” (NKJV) The trio of loving God, His Son, and our fellowman is twirled together in these verses to make sure we make all the connections between them (also in 2:3, 5, 3:14, 22–24, 4:21). They are all linked and we must hold onto both the Godhead and His creations if we want to serve either one. It is interesting to realize that by keeping the commandments we show love for our neighbors. Our examples are not all that blesses them. Those who have God’s Spirit can share that light and influence with those around them. God’s commandments are a blessing to all. Life is easier when we live as God directs. “My yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30).

1 John 5:4–5 “This is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. . . . that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God” This verse answers how a saint can overcome the world. There is a beautiful integration that comes from practicing love and faith together. Our faith in Jesus’ plan allows us to place our priorities heavenward and thus give us victory over worldly temptations. Only through Jesus’ redeeming powers can we really be removed from the sins of this world eternally. This also transports us to “overcoming” rather than just “surviving.” In the beginning of chapter five, John opens a discussion on how faith and love benefit each other, and how faith, love, and obedience work together.³⁵

Many Witnesses Testify of Jesus as the Son of God

1 John 5:6-21

1 John 5:6-8 “This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood” (NIV) John uses symbols from birth, for rebirth. In the birthing process there is great pain, water, blood, near death (sometimes), and then new life. Being born again through Jesus Christ requires the waters of baptism and His atoning blood painfully shed for our sins. John and Moses brought these symbols together as the Lord taught them.

1 JOHN 5:6-8	MORTAL BIRTH	RE-BIRTH INTO GOD'S KINGDOM	MOSES 6:58-60
Water	In which fetus grows	Baptism by immersion	Mortals born into world by water, blood, the spirit, and born again into the kingdom of heaven, also of water, of the Spirit, and cleansed by the blood of Christ By the water ye keep the commandment,
Blood	Through blood the fetus is nourished and grows. In the birth, blood is spilt.	Blood of Christ, redeems mortals from death	By the blood ye are sanctified,
Spirit	Spirit body, literal offspring of God, joins mortal body	Cleansing power of Spirit, purifies mortals to dwell with God again	By the Spirit ye are justified, to enjoy eternal life

Most modern English translations omit much of verse seven (including BSB, BLB, JB, NAS, NEB, NIV, RSV).

1 John 5:9–13 We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater . . . And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (NIV) God’s witness is far greater than man’s witness, yet humans often trust physical witnesses more than God’s spiritual witnesses. These verses give one pause to ask, what do I accept as a valid witness of truth, from whom, and how? Those who lack faith call for evidence and reasoning without a witness of the Spirit. God’s greatest witness, and gift of love, is the life and death of His Son Jesus. We accept God’s gift by using repentance through the Savior’s atonement, and then He opens the way for Eternal Life or exaltation.

1 John 5:13 “and that you may *continue to believe in the name of the Son of God*” (JST, NKJV). This last phrase in the KJV is missing from modern English translations. Interestingly, the JST addition of “continue” is also added in the New King James translation. Without this phrase, the verse speaks either of the Calvinistic thought that if one is given belief, they know they are predestined to exaltation, or else it is written to those sealed up to eternal life (also see verse 11). The JST clarifies that the audience still needs to continue working.

1 John 5:14–15 “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” This may be misleading and need clarifying. We learn in D&C 6:14 that God always hears our prayers and gives us direction: “as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit.” But He will only give us what we ask for if it is right. And “if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong” (D&C 9:9). God’s silence is actually a blessing, as His eternal perspective is more than we comprehend. Learning to ask according to God’s will, and to listen for all inspiration is a spiritual skill that requires the Spirit’s tutoring. John’s qualifying guideline leads us to begin our requests with: “may I pray for this?” or “is this the best thing I should be asking?” The key is to always seek the Spirit in prayer.



Old Saint Paul’s Nativity Detail by Karl Parsons.
Photo by PaulaR123 via Wikimedia Commons.

1 John 5:16 “If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life . . . There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that” (NIV). John may be encouraging disciples to pray for those who are sick, but I do not think so. There are two things that confuse me about this verse. First, is the sin unto death the unpardonable sin? Denying the sure witness of the Comforter? And second, by praying for someone else we cannot remove their own accountability.

1 John 5:17 “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death” John refers to some form of the word “sin” twenty-seven times in this letter. The Greek noun and verb (*hamarta/hamartia*) mean: “missing the mark; hence: (a) guilt, sin, (b) a fault, failure (in an ethical sense), sinful deed.”³⁶ John does not leave room for rationalizing our mistakes as he defines: “All wrongdoing is sin” (RSV, NIV). The second half of this verse is confusing, in part because the ancient world often attributed illnesses to sins. He may also be referring to murder, or something else.

1 John 5:18–20 “We know . . .” John repeats “we know” three times at the end of his Epistle as a summary and testimony:

1. “. . . whosoever is born of God sinneth not” (repeated in John 3:6, 8). The KJV sounds as if the righteous cannot sin and those who are elect do not need to work toward becoming Christlike. But, the JST once again changes the Calvinistic wording by adding five new words and cutting out three. “Whosoever is born of God *continueth* not *in sin*; but he that is begotten of God *and* keepeth himself, that wicked one overcometh him not.” The addition of *overcometh* identifies how Satan attacks us. He tries to influence us, but we do not have to yield. If we are not sinning Satan cannot “overcome” or conquer us. Many modern English translations also add the phrase, “continue in sin,” as Joseph did.
2. “. . . we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (NIV) As we are surrounded by wickedness, we do not even recognize all of it.
3. “. . . the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him” (NIV) John triumphantly confesses our Savior and our potential to become one with Him (John 17:21). Again he uses the definition of “one” as “we are with him.” Truly knowing God in the deepest sense of the meaning is the same as receiving Eternal Life to live with Him. This is repeated from Jesus’ Last Supper where John’s focuses on the intercessory prayer (John 17).

1 John 5:21 “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” John closes his testimony with a warning to his audience, “little children,” against idols. Idols encompassed far more than the Ephesian statues of the goddess Diana (Acts 19:24, 27–28, 34). In this sense, an idol is anything that takes one away from God. What takes you from God? What interrupts your Sabbath day?

2 JOHN

Find the Doctrine of Christ through Love

Author

“The Elder [or Presbyter]” (traditionally, John the Beloved, son of Zebedee and Salome). Peter also introduced himself as an “Elder” (1 Peter 5:1). In the Restored church, we call our Apostles, “Elder” interchangeably, too. At the organization of the church, the Prophet Joseph taught: “an apostle is an elder” (D&C 20:38).

The early Christian historian, Eusebius, recorded that John lived in Ephesus after Paul had opened the mission.³⁷ He spoke of him being a very old man who was known by Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. Even though John doesn’t identify himself as the beloved apostle, the style is very similar to his Gospel, and 1 John, so traditionally the authorship is given to the same man. We believe that Jesus gave John his desire to remain on the earth and serve God until the Second Coming (John 21:22–23).

Audience:

“The Elect [or Chosen] Lady and her children,” (used as a figure of speech for the church and its members). Most scholars assume that the Elder wrote to either a “house church” (the saints usually met in someone’s home), or his own family (which may have included Mary, the Lord’s mother, John 19:26–27). John or the Elder uses a more personal tone to tell them he will visit soon.

Themes

Truth and Love (which share similarities with the Gospel—John 1:14, 17, 8:44; 18:37).

Outline

- 1:1–3 Greetings
- 1:4–11 Walking in True Doctrine and Love
- 1:12–13 Final Greeting

2 JOHN 1

Greeting

2 John 1:1–3

2 John 1:1 “The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth” The analogy of the “church” as a lady was used by the Lord during His ministry. Jesus introduced Himself symbolically as the “bride groom” and the church as his bride (Mark 2:19). If the “elect lady” represents the church, then its members are



St. John the Evangelist by Titian, first half of 16th century. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

“her children.” Tradition holds that John wrote to an unnamed church congregation in or near Ephesus.

Another interpretation speculates that the “elect lady and her children” refer to John’s wife and family. Some also project that the “*elect lady*” may refer to Mary (if she were still living and in John’s charge, John 19:26). The Prophet Joseph used the same title for Emma in D&C 25:3.³⁸ John’s gospel and first epistle uses 3 words for “children,” but in these two letters, just one: *teknon*/“offspring . . . affectionate address, helpers.”

Whoever the lady and her children are, they were known and loved by “all who know the truth.” The smaller of the two Epistles of John each add truth and love to their otherwise standard Hellenistic greeting. The words “truth” and “love” are included together four times in this short Epistle, and once each in the other two (1 John 3:18; 2 John 1:1, 3, 10; 3 John 1:1).

2 John 1:2 “The truth that abides in us and will be with us forever” (ESV) The Gospels record Jesus as saying “I tell you the **truth**” over one-hundred times. If He is the source of truth, then the Elder may be referring to the Lord or the Spirit of the Lord that dwells in Him. Truth may also refer to God’s knowledge, or Jesus as the Christ, His teachings, revelation, or election.

2 John 1:3 “Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” The opening is a customary greeting used twelve times in New Testament Epistles (with John adding, “*truth and love*”).

Walking in Truth and Love

2 John 1:4-6

2 John 1:4 “I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father has commanded us” (BSB) John compliments the “children/members” for living the gospel or “walking in truth” (BLB). Walking in the light is also a phrase that means something similar as used in the Dead Sea Scrolls.³⁹

2 John 1:5-6 “. . . we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments” We do not know what “beginning” he refers to, but it is certainly since the beginning of the Gospel, and perhaps since the time of creation (Genesis 1:1). John’s definition of love is as an action verb. His emphasis on love is very consistent throughout his writings (this verse repeats portions of 1 John 2:7; 3:11; and

John 13:34, 35; 15:12). His definition for love, may refer to God as it relates to walking after His commandments, or it may be teaching a broader truth, that all divine love includes obeying the Gospel. The Johannine writings consistently teach that if we really love God, then we will love our fellow humans.

Beware of Deceivers

2 John 1:7-12

2 John 1:7 “Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” The same troubles of apostasy that were repeated in seven verses in 1 John are also a problem for these Christians (and in Alma 30:12–48, with Korihor, “there should be no Christ,” and Jung, existentialists, etc.). Anti-Christians promoted the idea that Jesus was not the Messiah, nor that he was resurrected with a body of flesh. “The full implication of this teaching attacks revelation, prophets, resurrection, and authority. It also promotes skepticism, empiricism, survival of the fittest, naturalism, and moral relativism.”⁴⁰

2 John 1:8–9 “Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son” (NIV) A belief of Jesus is essential for any real worship of the Father, as He is our mediator with Elohim. He teaches that Christians must obey and honor the teachings of Jesus. Literally “continue,” or “abideth” (KJV), or “without remaining” (BSB) means, “going ahead and remaining in the teaching of Christ.” Not only should the saints hold to what was taught from the beginning, but they should also be cautious that all of learning is truth (similar to 1 John 2:23, 24).

2 John 1:10 “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him” This probably refers to the “house-churches” that the saints gathered in for worship meetings.⁴¹ We must not support those who teach falsehoods or attack the Lord’s church. They are building up Satan’s kingdom. Elder Dallin H. Oaks gave a Conference talk to that effect.⁴² Paul, Peter, and John all warn against false teachers who may splinter the saints and obscure the truth.

2 John 1:11 “. . . neither bid him God speed” The 1600 KJV phrase, “God speed” wished one prosperity. The greeting in Greek, wished one well. Evil itinerant preachers could only exist if they were accepted and fed. To stop supporting them would stop their heretical preaching (as refraining from shopping on Sunday would close the stores on Sunday).

2 John 1:12–13 “I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings” (NIV) John apologizes for his brevity and hopes for a future visit. He ends with a greeting from the saints from his current congregation, “thy elect sister” (KJV).

3 JOHN

Author

The Elder or Presbyter (2 John)

Themes

Shared with John 1:14, 17, 8:44; 18:37

- Truth and love,
- Good and Bad Leadership

Audience

John wrote a personal note to a friend named, Gaius, it is the shortest letter in the New Testament. It was probably the length of a piece of parchment.

Outline

- 1:1–4 Greetings
- 1:5–8 Gaius Thanked for Hospitality
- 1:9–12 Do not follow a bad Example
- 1:13–14 Final Greeting

Greetings

3 John 1:1–4

3 John 1:1 “The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth” (NIV) The author again opens by naming himself, “Elder” (see 2 John 1:1). He writes to a fellow saint named, GAIUS, about missionary fellowship. Gaius was a popular first name in the Roman Empire.⁴³ We can find two or three different people named Gaius in New Testament within Paul’s circles (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 1 Corinthians 1:14; Romans 16:23). All three names in the epistle are Greco-Roman, without any derivative Hebrew or Semitic connections. This suggests that these men were gentile converts, but probably were three different people.

3 John 1:2 “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (NKJV) The wish of prosperous health—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—was a common greeting in Greek correspondence. We presume it means that if “the Elder” is John, then he used a scribe trained in Greek writing. This is the only Epistle that includes this standard greeting in the New Testament.

3 John 1:3–4 “. . . I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” John had heard from “some believers” (NIV), or traveling missionaries, that Gaius was still a faithful saint, and includes him as “my children.” As mentioned earlier, the use of “children”/*teknon* was an endearing term used by masters for their disciples. Just as in the previous letters, John emphasizes “walking in truth” (ESV) here and in the following verse as an action approach to living Christ’s Gospel. This Greek verb for “walk”/*peripateó*, was used Hebraistically in an ethical sense as “I conduct my life, lives.”⁴⁴

This verse has beautiful implications to families—our nuclear, extended, adopted, and church families. Missionaries certainly feel this for their converts. I really think John meant a far broader circle that stretched beyond his posterity to his children in the gospel.

Gaius Commended for Hospitality

3 John 1:5–8

3 John 1:5–6 “Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God” (NIV) John thanks Gaius for his kindness and for extending love to the visiting leaders, whom he did not know previously. We get a picture of the early church leaders traveling to different groups of Christians. Gaius’ example to support missionaries and church leaders is still applicable. He helped to build the kingdom from his home. We, too, help the missionary work when we help a missionary. This message of brotherly love is consistent throughout John’s writings.

3 John 1:7–8 “For they went out on behalf of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers for the truth” (BSB) Missionaries and servants of God go forth as representatives of His Name. This is especially true of the Apostles. The work is not ours, but His. We help as servants of God to build His Kingdom. The text sounds as if their leaders or missionaries went without purse or script (Luke 10:4; 22:35–36).

Diotrephes and Demetrius

3 John 1:9–10 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us” (NIV) In contrast to Gaius’ loyalty and hospitality, John also wrote to warn him of Diotrephes, a bad example of a church leader. (This is the only time the word “church” appears in the Gospel or epistles of John.) It appears that Diotrephes served in a local congregation with Gaius. John alerts him of three specific problems.

4. Diotrephes likes to be foremost and will not bend to other leaders.

5. He ignored the authority of John by rejecting an earlier letter to the church. (If Peter has died, then John acts as the head of the church at this point.) The RSV reads, “does not acknowledge my authority.”
6. He cast out good members of the church. No heresy seems to be involved, just insubordination by an ambitious official.

If we can trust an early Christian source, *Apostolical Constitutions*, the story had a happy ending as John later ordained Diotrephes as a bishop of Philadelphia.⁴⁵

3 John 1:11 “Beloved, follow not that which is evil . . . He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God” The letter teaches this principle: follow those who do good, or bear good fruit. Little punishment is mentioned, other than to not follow his example. John’s writing often sounds like Mormon: “all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil” (Moroni 7:12; also see Omni 1:25).

3 John 1:12 “Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him” (NIV) Demetrius is the third person mentioned by name in this letter. We find the same name (but probably a different person) in Acts 19:24, and a Demas (possibly short for Demetrius) in Philemon 1:24 and Colossians 4:14. Demetrius may have delivered John’s letter, or perhaps he needed a little extra validation from Gaius.

3 John 1:13–14 “I had many things to write, but . . . I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name” The similarity between the second and third of John’s endings is one of the reasons why we assume it was the same author. John adds one addition to Gaius that has general application to church members and leaders which is to become acquainted with one’s fellow flock members well enough to call them by name.

JUDE

Warnings and Exhortations

Author

Jude is the nickname for Yehuda, Judah, Juda, or Judas. He introduces himself as a servant of Christ and “brother of James.” The New Testament includes multiple James and Judas.

7. One of the original Twelve Apostle, Judas, is identified in Luke 6:16 as “Judas *the brother* of James” in the KJV, and “Judas the son of James” in most modern translations. To differentiate himself from Judas Iscariot, he may have chosen to shorten his name, as Jude.

8. Judas in Matthew 14:55, is identified as the brother to James and son of Mary and Joseph, and half-brother of Jesus: “Is not this the carpenter’s son. . . and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?” (Mark 6:3).

9. James the brother of John the Beloved, son of Zebedee and Salome, is most well known in the Gospels, but we do not know of another brother named Jude or Judas.

We also see similarities phrases in this Epistle that are found in 2 Peter which opens the possibility of shared authorship, original source material, or scribes.

Audience

Jude writes to devout Christians who are “sanctified,” “preserved,” and “called” (Jude 1:1, KJV). The audience probably included Jewish converts to Christianity, as the text includes “you already know all this” and then quotes several Old Testament and apocryphal stories from Moses’ exodus, Korah’s sons, Enoch, Michael, and Cain (Jude 1:5, NIV). The audience was aware of attacks against their faith by “scoffers” trying to destroy the church.

Structure

The Epistle of Jude was carefully crafted. It opens with a friendly wish of God’s blessings. The body of the letter exhorts the saints to “earnestly contend for the faith.” The first of the two main sections warns against apostates that had crept in by deceit (1:4–16). This material is organized to alternate between crime and punishment in triplets. In the second half, Jude admonishes the saints to steadfastness which he divides into two parts—prophecy and exhortation (1:17–25). He also uses key words that give the letter unity and bind it together.



Chiasm

Jerome H. Neyrey found “a hint” of a chiastic structure in the exposition from verses 4–17.⁴⁶

- A 1:4a. Opponents proscribed
- B 1:4b Opponents labeled as godless
- C 1:6 Those judged kept in darkness
- C' 1:13 Those judged kept in darkness
- B' 1:15–16 Opponents labeled as godless
- A' 1:17 Opponents pre-told

Outline⁴⁷

- 1:1–2 Opening Blessing
- 1:1:3 Exhortation for Faithfulness
- 1:1:4–16 Crimes and Punishment
 - 1:4 Three Charges against Deceivers
 - 1:5–7 Three Paradigms of Punishment
 - 1:8 Three Charges
 - 1:9 Prophecy of Punishment
 - 1:10 Charge and Punishment
 - 1:11 Three Paradigms of Punished Sinners
 - 1:12–13 Multiple Metaphors of Charges
 - 1:14–16 Prophecies of Punishment
- 1:1:17–23 Warnings and Exhortations to Faith, Love
 - 1:17–19 Prophecies of Wicked
 - 1:20–23 Exhortations: Build Faith, Prayer, the Spirit
- 1:1:24–25 Benediction

Greetings

Jude 1:1–3

Jude 1:1–2 “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called” We understand Jude’s audience and their relationship to God more intimately as we look closely at three Greek words. They are: “loved”/*agapaó* by the Father, and “kept intact”/*téreo* “to watch over, to guard” by the Savior, and “invited”/*kléto* “summoned by God to an office or to salvation.”⁴⁸ This summarizes the attachment and stewardship that disciples have with the Godhead. That sweet

relationship between saints and God provides mercy, peace, and love. The title, “God the Father,” is found twenty-nine times in New Testament, all but one are found in the Epistles (across several English translations).

Jude 1:3 “Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith” (NIV) The purpose of this Epistle is an “exhort[ation] . . . to contend earnestly” (BLB) “to defend the faith” (CEV). Jude feels obligated to admonish the saints to protect the truths which God entrusted to them.

Deceivers Pervert Truth—Their Crimes and Punishments

Jude 1:4-16

Jude 1:4 “Certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you” (NIV) While they pose to give help, apostates “secretly or under pretense . . . slip in a side door”/ *pareisduno* but deceitfully lure believers away.⁴⁹ These deceivers “pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality” (NIV). The same problem exists in many forms of today’s Christianity (also see 2 Peter 2:1).

“**this condemnation, ungodly ones changing the grace of our God into sensuality and denying our only master**” (BLB) This verse lists the first of three crimes, and their punishment follows in the next three verses:

1. Ungodly men came to the church stealthily to deceive
2. Licensed immorality
3. Denied the Sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ

Jude 1:5 “Although you are fully aware of this, I want to remind you that after Jesus had delivered His people out of the land of Egypt, He destroyed those who did not believe” (BSB) Jude illustrates the punishment of the wicked with Old Testament examples of apostates who also enticed and disrupted faith of the Israelites. An entire generation died off for their disbelief. Jude warns that those Christians who yearn for worldliness or “Egypt” will fall into the same pattern.

Jude 1:6 “angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great

CRIMES

PUNISHMENTS

day” The fallen angels followed Lucifer in the “first estate.” Only the KJV translates the phrase “just estate,” and the Prophet Joseph Smith used it again to translate Abraham 3:26, 28 when describing our premortal existence. Other faiths interpret this verse as referring to angels who abandoned their “positions of authority” (NIV), or “did not stay within their own domain” (BSB). Without the context of the restoration, one cannot see the full meaning of this verse. Fortunately, the prophet Joseph Smith taught:

The spirits in the eternal world are like the spirits in this world. When those have come into this world and received tabernacles, then died and again have risen and received glorified bodies, they will have an ascendancy over the spirits who have received no bodies, or kept not their **first estate**, like the devil. The punishment of the devil was that he should not have a habitation like men. The devil’s retaliation is, he comes into this world, binds up men’s bodies, and occupies them himself. When the authorities come along, they eject him from a stolen habitation.⁵⁰

Jude 1:7 “Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (NIV) The third example of punishment falls on sexual immorality. The Bible often refers to Sodom and Gomorrah as a warning of similar punishment for sexual immorality (Genesis 18:20; 19:28; Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 49:18; 50:40; Amos 4:11; Matthew 10:13; 2 Peter 2:6). In 2004, Elder Boyd K. Packer compared our society to Sodom and Gomorrah as well: “Nothing happened in Sodom and Gomorrah which exceeds in wickedness and depravity that which surrounds us now . . . [Then] these things were localized. Now they are spread across the world, and they are among us.”⁵¹ Jude warns his audience that God will enforce this disobedience with severe consequences.

Jude 1:8 “In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings” Jude makes three more charges. The *Anchor Bible* translates this second phrase about dreamers, as “hypnotized as they are.”⁵² We can recognize this type of apostate because they:

4. Contaminate or defile their God given bodies
5. Do not respect God’s servants as having authority
6. Speak evil of the Lord’s anointed

CRIMES

Jude 1:9 “Even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”” (NIV) In the biblical canon, Jude alone tells stories from this apocryphal book, *The Assumption of Moses*.⁵³ It describes Moses’ translation in front of Joshua and Caleb (also see D&C 84:25).⁵⁴ The apocryphal story describes Satan and Michael debating over Moses killing the Egyptian. Michael, the archangel steps in to remind the Devil that God is the judge, “The Lord will punish you” (CEV). Jude depicts apostates as the devil who reviled against Moses. He wants the saints to also say likewise and rebuke the servants of the devil who are slandering the church leaders.

Jude 1:10–11 “These people slander whatever they do not understand . . . Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain . . . Balaam’s . . . Korah’s rebellion” (NIV) Jude again rebukes the deceivers for speaking of things which they do not know, and attack God’s laws.⁵⁵ He then offers three more Old Testament examples that illustrate wicked men who receive God’s punishment.

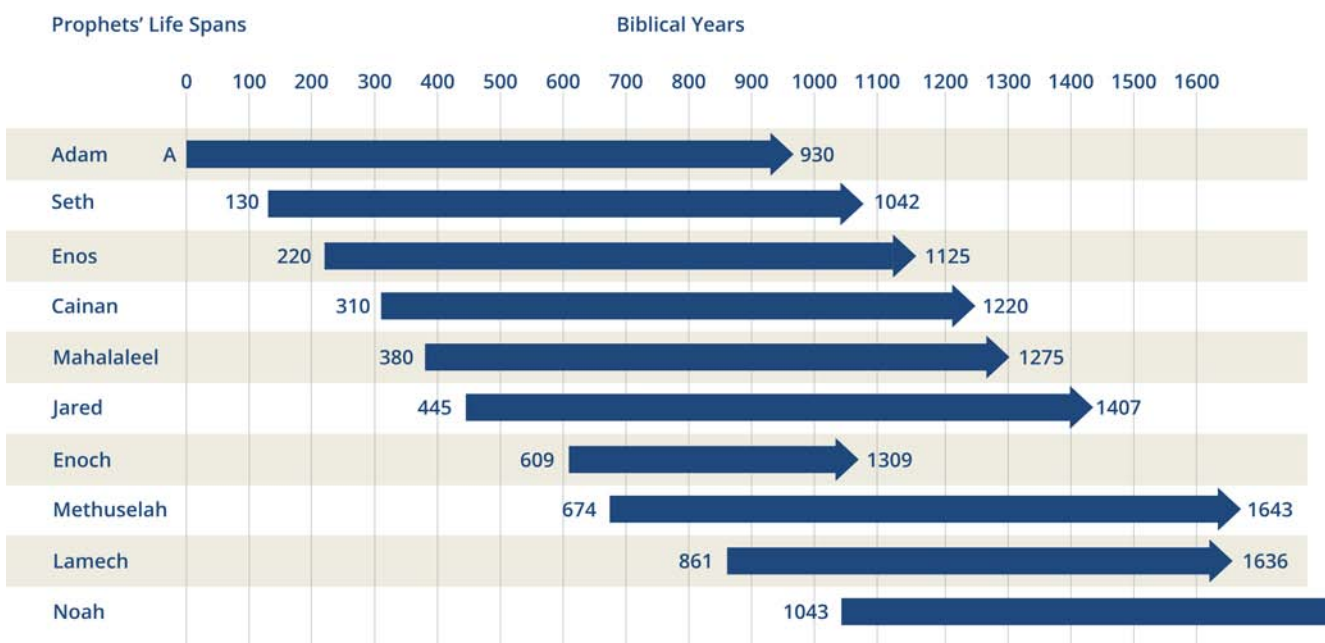
1. **Cain** is Jude’s next example of heresy. Cain represents “the archetype of those who through zeal, envy, social dissatisfaction, and hostility to society, drive their brethren in the faith to death.”⁵⁶ The fratricide of apostates may be spiritual death, but it well could lead to murder as well with the growth of Christian persecution (especially under Domitian in ~AD 95).
2. **Balaam’s** sin of idolatry sought to seduce God’s people to follow alien masters and then paid the false teachers for gaining followers.
3. **Korah (Core)**, was an Israelite who rebelled against Moses’ authority by instigating a rebellion (Numbers 16:1–35). Jude warns his readers that they will end up like sons of Korah if they follow these men.

Jude 1:12–13 “These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain . . . wild waves . . .” (NIV) Early Christians referred to partaking of the Lord’s sacrament as a “feasts of charity” or “love feasts.” Paul also described Sabbath shared meals (xx). Jude’s three physical examples of clouds, waves, trees, are self-explanatory for the similar effects left by these apostates. The overlap with 2 Peter 2:13, 14, 17.

Prophecies of Punishment

Jude 1:14-16

Jude 1:14-15 “Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon . . . all their ungodly deeds” The prophet Enoch is mentioned in eleven biblical verses (Genesis 4:17, 18; 5:18, 19, 21-24; Luke 3:37; Hebrews 11:5; Jude 1:14). The table below outlines the timeline of prophets as described by years in Genesis. The table below shows where Enoch fits into the biblical timeline:



Jude refers to ten-thousand saints who will join the Lord at His Second Coming, which the Book of Revelations echoes. Outside of the Bible, three other ancient texts shed more light on him.

- First or Ethiopic Enoch—quoted by Jude (1 Enoch 1:9). Today, Jews and traditional Christians do not hold Enoch as scripture.
- Second or Slavonic Enoch,
- Third or Hebrew Enoch describes Rabbi Ishmael’s vision of Enoch in the 7th heaven (discovered 1873).

JOSEPH SMITH AND ENOCH

In addition, the Prophet Joseph Smith received much information on Enoch by revelation including Moses 6-7 and eleven verses in the D&C. The restored texts have unique information as well as some that collaborate with

the three apocryphal books of Enoch.⁵⁷ Joseph Smith also spoke of both Enoch and Jude in a sermon in Nauvoo:

Now this Enoch God reserved unto Himself, that he should not die at that time, and appointed unto him a ministry unto terrestrial bodies, of whom there has been but little revealed. He is reserved also unto the Presidency of a dispensation, and more shall he said of him and terrestrial bodies in another treatise. He is a ministering angel, to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation and appeared unto Jude as Abel did unto Paul; therefore, Jude spoke of him (14, 15 verses).⁵⁸

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Jude 1:15–16 “To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly . . . murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts . . .” The Lord will execute judgment on all (good and bad). He will convince the unrepentant of their sins. This becomes a regular in restored scripture as well with over fifty reference (i.e. 2 Nephi 9:15–16, 46; etc.).

Prophecies of Wicked

Jude 1:17–19

Jude 1:17–18 “But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold . . . ‘In the last times there will be scoffers” Jude and 2 Peter 3:3 cite this statement from the Lord warning His apostles that persecution would rise among the wicked (although it is not in our Gospels).

Jude 1:19 “It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit” (ESV) He offers another key to discern false leaders or teachers. They “separate themselves” (KJV) which means they cause divisions among the people, as well as value materialism, and do not have the Spirit of God directing them.

Exhortations to Build Faith, Prayer with the Spirit, Seek God’s Love

Jude 1:20–23

Jude 1:20–21 “But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for . . . eternal life” (NIV) Jude offers three keys to the saints to avoid apostasy:

1. Build your faith (the Book of Mormon teaches this happens when joined by repentance, Helaman 5:41)
2. Pray with the Spirit (also see D&C 50:29–30; 101:27)
3. Seek God’s Love as you Patiently Wait our Savior’s gifts (also see 1 Nephi 11:25; Jacob 3:2, 6–7; etc.)

Jude 1:22 Be merciful to those who doubt; save others by snatching them from the fire . . . even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh” (NIV) This image comes from the ancient practice of stopping the spread of disease by fire. The Law of Moses instructed clothing should be burned if it were spotted with diseases. So too D&C 36:6 reads: “Save yourselves from this untoward generation, and come forth out of the fire, hating even the garments spotted with the flesh.” Jude exhorts the saints to avoid contact with even a spot of sin.

Benediction: Doxology

Jude 1:24–25

Jude 1:24–25 “To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude close his Epistle with a benediction, asking God for divine help to “to keep you from falling.” In Christian terms, these last two verses form a “doxology” (a liturgical formula of praise to God) just as we find in Romans 11:36; 16:25–27; Galatians 1:5; Philippians 4:20; Ephesians 3:20–21; 1 Timothy 4:17; 6:16; 2 Timothy 4:18; and 2 Peter 3:18. Look at the similarities between these prayers or hymns (these use the *Anchor Bible* translations⁵⁹):

ROMANS 16:25–27

to him who is able
to strengthen you . . .
to the only wise God.
be glory
forevermore
Amen

EPHESIANS 3:20–22

To him. . . who is
able to do . . .
to Him
be glory
to all generations
Amen

JUDE 1:24–25

to the One who can guard
you . . . to the only God
be glory, majesty, might,
and authority
before all ages, now and
forever
Amen

2 PETER 3:18

to him
be the glory both now
and to the day of
eternity
Amen

The Lord's prayer also acknowledged God the Father's glory and included about one third of the prayer filled with praise and honoring God. So too Jude's lasts words reflect his witness and testimony of God.

Header Image: Saint John the Evangelist Weeping by Colijn de Coter, ca. 1504. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

ENDNOTES

1. As explained earlier in Romans 1, “Introduction,” biblical compilers organized the Epistles by length, not chronologically. Paul wrote the most, so his books all come first—largest to smallest. John wrote next to the shortest epistles, so his first letters come at the end, ending with the shortest, Jude.
2. Raymond Brown, *The Anchor Bible: The Epistles of John* (NYC, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 20. Brown does not think all four books share the same author, even though he quotes another scholar who argued: “The three Epistles and the Gospel of John are so closely allied in diction, style, and general outlook that the burden of proof lies with the person who would deny their common authorship.”
3. Brown, *Epistles of John*, 10. “Tertullian (d. AD 215) cites 1 John some forty or fifty times, referring to it as the work of John. Clement of Alexandria (d. ca. AD 220) not only cites 1 John but speaks of it as ‘the greater epistle.’”
4. Terry L. Wilder, J. Daryl Charles, Kendell H. Easley, *Faithful to the End: An Introduction to Hebrews Through Revelation* (Nashville, TN: Zondervan, 2007), 173. Papias of Hierapolis (died 120), “was the first one to refer expressly to a letter of John as being the work of the apostle. Irenaeus credited John with writing 1 and 2 John. Origen designated the apostle as the author of all three letters.” In spite of this, scholars have debated the issue for centuries. By the fourth century these epistles were generally accepted as scripture and placed before Revelations.
5. At times the JST is not restoring what was originally said, but adds clarification like modernizing spellings.
6. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:290.
7. Strong’s #2842, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2842.htm> (accessed 11-11-19)
8. Elder Jörg Klebingat, “Approaching the Throne of God with Confidence,” General Conference October 2014.
9. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: A Concise Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988), 111.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” General Conference April 2019.
11. Strong’s, #5040, <https://biblehub.com/greek/5040.htm> (accessed 11/11/19).
12. Ibid., #3875, <https://biblehub.com/greek/3875.htm> (accessed 11/11/19). “Notice Jesus is the paraclete (‘advocate’), a title which the Gospel applies to the Spirit.” Brown, *Concise Commentary*, 111.
13. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:381.
14. Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 558–559.
15. Brown, *Concise Commentary*, 111.
16. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, “Exaltation,” Margaret Pope, 3.479.
17. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, *The Allegory of the Olive Tree* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1994), 271.
18. Kelly Ogden, Andrew Skinner, *New Testament Apostles Testify of Christ* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1998), 295.
19. Elder Jörg Klebingat, “Approaching the Throne of God with Confidence,” General Conference October 2014.
20. Brown, *Concise Commentary*, 115.
21. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4.266. The Holy Spirit of Promise also became a topic that Joseph addressed outside

of the revelation.

22. There is debate on the role of the “light of Christ,” as restored scripture includes a range of influences. For example, this is the light “which is in all things, which giveth life to all things” (D&C 88:13, 11; also see 84:46).
23. Preface to Book of Mormon, circa August 1829, Historical Introduction, (<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/search?query=lost%2016%20pages&sort=relevance&page=1&perpage=10&startdate=&enddate=&transcripts=false&issuggestion=false&types=documents-papers|documents-papers-documents|related-materials|biographical-directory|geographical-directory|glossary|event> (accessed 11-16-19).
24. Dallin H. Oaks, “Taking upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ,” General Conference April 1985. He also published a book on this entitled, *His Holy Name*.
25. 1 John 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; 3J 1:1, 3, 5, 11. The KJV translates nine as “beloved,” but in 1 John 2:7, uses “brethren.”
26. George A. Smith, Sermon, November 28, 1869, in “Minutes of Meetings Held in Provo City,” microfilm of holograph, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. (“It should be noted that at the time of this statement of George A. Smith, the Mormons were in a debate with a growing number of Spiritualists in Utah, and hence had a reason to emphasize the importance of discernment.” <http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=imwjournal>)
27. Raymond Brown, *Anchor Bible: The Epistles of John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 502.
28. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 375–6.
29. These ideas of early Gnosticism are also reflected in 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, and Colossians.
30. Brown, *Anchor Bible: The Epistles of John*, 485.
31. *Ibid.*, 514. For a review of what John taught on *being “born of God,”* see John 3:3–7; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18.
32. *Ibid.*, 516.
33. Susan Juster, *Doomsayers: Anglo-American Prophecy in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 209–210. A rich visionary culture filled early America with many prophets. Susan Juster documents over three hundred published sources of unorthodox prophets who circulated their visions in early America. The Prophet Joseph Smith’s vision, exceeded what was held to be the limits of acceptable responses to prayers, but it was not entirely unique. Terryl Givens has pointed out that many nineteenth-century visions often had a mythic orientation, but “Joseph’s language was anything but reveling with metaphor and obscurity.” Givens reported that Bushman found thirty-two published pamphlets that described visionary experiences between 1783 and 1815. Terryl Givens, *Hand of Mormon* (New York: Oxford, University Press, 2002), 72, 79. Perhaps a little more vagueness would have been easier for Joseph’s Methodist minister to accept. As it stood, though, his vision violated the minister’s bounds of propriety because in part of 1 John 4:12 KJV.
34. Brown, *Anchor Bible: The Epistles of John*, 561.
35. Class with Judith Moss, 2012, Palo Alto, Ca.
36. Strong’s # 264, 266. <https://biblehub.com/greek/264.htm> (accessed 11-14-19).
37. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*: III.23:7 “The church at Ephesus was founded by Paul, and John remained there till Trajan’s time; so she is a true witness of what the apostles taught.” Quoting Irenaeus (AD 180), *Against Heresies*,

book II; “All the cleargy [*sic*]who is Asia came in contact with John, the Lord’s disciple, testify that John taught the truth to them; for he remained with them till Trajan’s [98 to 117 A.D.] time.” There is still scholarly debate on this matter of John in Ephesus.

38. The Greek the word “*elect*” is from the same root as, “election” (as in the seal of “calling and election” from 2 Peter 1:10).
39. Brown, *Concise Commentary*, 123.
40. Kelly Ogden, *New Testament Apostles Testify of Christ*, 300.
41. Everett Ferguson, ed. *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd Ed (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2013), 546. “House-church” is used in New Testament to describe early Christian churches that met in the saints’ homes. The book of Acts and 1 Corinthians refers to these “house-churches” in Acts 1:13–14; 2:46; 20:7–12, 20;v 1 Corinthians 16:19.
42. Elder Dallin H. Oaks.
43. Brown, *Anchor Bible: The Epistles of John*, 702.
44. Strong’s, #4043, *peripateó*, <https://biblehub.com/greek/4043.htm> (accessed, 11-15-19).
45. John Stott, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Letters of John* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014, reprint), 237.
46. Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Anchor Bible: 2 Peter, Jude* (NYC, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 24.
47. *Ibid.*, 23; adapted.
48. Strong’s #25, 5083, 2822, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2822.htm> (accessed 11/15/19).
49. Strong’s #3921, *pareisduó*, <https://biblehub.com/greek/3921.htm> (accessed 11/15/19).
50. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:403; for original spelling of scribes notes see Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 205.
51. Elder Boyd K. Packer, “**Address to CES religious educators**,” Feb. 6, 2004, 4.
52. Neyrey, *The Anchor Bible: 2 Peter, Jude*, 65–66.
53. https://archive.org/stream/assumptionofmose00unknuoft/assumptionofmose00unknuoft_djvu.txt (accessed 11-15-19)
54. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, IV. viii, 48–49. “The children of Israel and Moses himself wept . . . Now as he went thence to the place where he was to vanish out of their sight, they all followed after him weeping; but Moses beckoned with his hand and bade them to stay behind in quiet . . . At Mount Abarim he dismissed the senate; and he was going to embrace Eleazar and Joshua and was still discoursing with them . . . A cloud stood over him on the sudden, and he disappeared in a certain valley, although he wrote in his holy books that he died” (referring to Deuteronomy 34:5–6).
55. Neyrey, *The Anchor Bible: 2 Peter, Jude*, 203. In approximately AD 95, 1st Clement also wrote about troublemakers who opposed authority.
56. Neyrey, *The Anchor Bible: 2 Peter, Jude*, 206; 1 Clement 4:1–7.
57. Hugh Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1986).
58. Smith, *History Church*, 4:209; Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 41.
59. Neyrey, *The Anchor Bible: 2 Peter, Jude*, 95.