

SAMPLE KYB STUDY

Introduction The letters of John

Historical tradition says that 1, 2 and 3 John were written by John the Apostle, probably towards the end of the first century. After Jesus died and rose again, he appeared to many of his disciples and stated that he would be back soon. By the time these letters were written, the apostles had faithfully preached the gospel all through the Mediterranean area, and many people had become believers.

But most of the first believers had died, and Jesus still hadn't returned. Many Christians were struggling and had become discouraged, particularly as they faced heavy persecution for believing in Jesus and heard wrong teaching about Jesus from false teachers. John was perhaps the only apostle still living — and therefore he was a significant and trustworthy witness to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. So John wrote these letters to encourage and strengthen believers to keep trusting in Jesus as the only way to truly know God, and to remind them that Jesus will come again.

Two great commands

As we turn to the first letter, we see that it centres on one great Saviour and two great commands. The commands cannot be disconnected from this Saviour. John's first focus is on love of God and one another, which reveals our attitude to sin; John usually issues one side of a command and then flips to the other side. So, John explains the impossibility of continuing in sin in chapter 3, then immediately moves onto the necessity to love others as an example of not sinning.

Loving is something we do by being actively involved in the lives of the people around us in practical ways, such as caring for their needs (1 John 3:17). This command is shaped by none other than Jesus himself, who has no sin in him and came to abolish sin. Jesus is the reason that we know what love is, because he gave himself for us.

John's second focus is to show that our attitude to sin comes from believing in Jesus, the Son of God. On the surface this looks easy and unimpressive, probably because in our era belief is a personal, private aspect of our life. Yet, as we read this letter, John demands that we understand that right belief about Jesus is critically important. Without a proper belief in Jesus we cannot have a relationship with God the Father, nor have we the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:22-24, 4:1-4).

(Question page follows)

Study 1

1 John 1:1 - 2:17

Fellowship with God

Day 1: Introduction

1. Read the Introduction. Why did John write his letters?
2. What are some of the key issues which John addresses in his letters?
3. How are John's letters relevant to us today?

Day 2: 1 John 1:1—4

4. a) Who do you think these verses are referring to?

b) List what we learn about this person in verses 1-2.
5. Who does John say he has fellowship with? (verses 3-4)
6. What do you think this “fellowship” means for us today?

Day 3: 1 John 1:5—10

7. If we say we have fellowship with God, what evidence will show that our claim is true or false?
8. a) What is true of us if “we claim to be without sin”? (verses 8, 10)

b) What happens to us if “we confess our sins”?

Day 4: 1 John 1:7—22

9. What two things does Jesus do *for* us? (1:7, 2:1)
10. a) Read Hebrews 9:22,28 What is necessary for atonement?

b) Read Hebrews 9: 22, 28 and 1 John 2:2.
What then is the significance of Jesus' death?
11. Write down two or three words or phrases which describe how you feel when you hear that Jesus has paid the price for all our sins.