

**Objective:** To deepen our relationship with God and neighbor through studying the Johannine Epistles.

**Requirements:** A Bible(NRSV or NIV is best, but any will do). The structure of the class is a verse by verse study of 1, 2, and 3 John.

Week 1

*Introduction*

1. Importance

A. Favorite texts

- a. 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleans us from all unrighteousness."
- b. 1 John 4:8, 4:16, "God is love"
- c. 1 John 3:13, "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers and sisters."
- d. 1 John 4:10, "This is love, not that we have loved God but God loved us and sent his Son as an expiatory sacrifice for our sins."
- e. 1 John 4:18b, "perfect love cast out fear."
- f. 1 John 4: 19, "We love because he first loved us."
- g. 1 John 4:20, "Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen."

B. John Wesley, "The wind being in my face, tempering the heat of the sun, I had a pleasant ride to Dublin. In the evening I began expounding the deepest part of the Holy Scripture, namely the First Epistle of John.... Here are sublimity and simplicity together, the strongest sense and the plainest language."

C. Relationship with Gospel of John—"In him was life and the life was the light to all people." John 1:4

D. Authorship: no name given, We will call him St. John the Elder("the elder" title used in 2&3 John) probably a follower of John the Apostle and Jesus (Eusebius) Some other traditions say is St. John the Apostle, or St. John the Divine

E. Audience—Johannine community (communal documents: Gospel of John, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation), Probably in Ephesus

2. Genre - Pastoral/Polemical tone, sermon? letter?

3. Purpose - So that "joy may be complete," Combat false teaching, proto-gnosticism

4. A Christian test kit - Robert Law said 1 John is "apparatus of test." There are 27 tests in these five chapters so we can determine if we are disciples of Jesus. Most of the tests begin with the condition word, "if."

5. Dualities
  - A. Light vs darkness
  - B. Truth vs falsehood
  - C. Children of God vs children of the devil
  - D. Love vs hate
6. Various Incompatibles (i.e. love of world and love of God) and inseparabilities (love of God and love of neighbor)
7. Three Movements
  - A. God is light
  - B. God is righteous
  - C. God is love
7. Key words
  - A. Abide(meno)-24 times, more per word than the Gospel of John
  - B. Fellowship(koinonia)
  - C. Life(zoe)
  - D. Knowing(gnosis)
  - E. Believing(pistis)
  - F. Loving/love(agape)
  - G. Children(teknon)

## *Chapter 1*

1. vv. 1-4, prologue (not epistolary greeting)
  - A. Language reminds us of the Gospel of John Chapter 1: beginning, life, word/logos
  - B. Easter appearance, parallel to Thomas encounter, Jesus Christ is still alive and will meet us where we are
  - C. Jesus is the word and the life and we are to meet him through this letter

### Hymn

## *The Love of God*

<p>1. The love of God is greater far  Than tongue or pen can ever tell;  It goes beyond the highest star,  And reaches to the lowest hell;  The guilty pair, bowed down with care,  God gave His Son to win;  His erring child He reconciled,  And pardoned from his sin.</p>	<p>2. Could we with ink the ocean fill,  And were the skies of parchment made,  Were every stalk on earth a quill,  And every man a scribe by trade;  To write the love of God above  Would drain the ocean dry;  Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  Though stretched from sky to sky.</p>
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### Refrain:

Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure--  
The saints' and angels' song.