

Let's Dismiss our Kids!



Our Text:

I John 1:1-2:2!

Our Title:

***The True Meaning Of
Fellowship!***

The Introduction to the New Testament Epistle of First John!

*As we journey through the epistle of I John
we will quickly discover that it is
an intensely practical book.*

*The focus of the author is perhaps summarized best
in the words given in his last epistle,
**“No greater joy can I have than this,
to hear that my children follow the truth!” (3 John 4)**
In This Book John Confronts Falsehood with Truth!*

The Theme of First John!

In chapter one, verse three, we are introduced to the controlling theme of the book!



FELLOWSHIP!

The Controlling Theme of I John!

I John 1:3

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us;

And indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Controlling Theme: Fellowship!

The fellowship that John is focusing on in this short epistle is the fellowship that we, as believers, have with God the Father through His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ!

In this epistle we will quickly discover that our fellowship with God is directly linked to our fellowship with those around us.

The First Sub-Theme in the Book Deals with False Teachers!

In chapter four, John turns our attention to the danger of the **false teachers** who have entered the church. His goal is to help us recognize those who cause division.

Here John warns us about how quickly our fellowship with God (and men) can be broken. In these verses John reminds us that the key to unity (fellowship in the church) is found in our love-relationship (or fellowship) with the Father. Thus, he warns us of the danger of false teachers who secretly enter the church to teach untrue doctrine.

The Second Sub-Theme in the Book Deals with Obedience!

In chapter five, John turns our attention from the curse of false teachers (in chapter 4) to the **blessings that come through our obedience to Christ (chapter 5). It is in this final chapter that we discover the results of a true and abiding relationship with God the Father:**

Love for our brothers and sisters in Christ!

The desire to be separated from the world!

The assurance of our eternal life!

The ability to contact God through prayer!

Let's Look at the Text!

1 John 1:1-2:2!



Webster's Dictionary!

Defines the word "fellowship" as "a state of being a partner." It then goes on to say, "fellowship is the friendly communion or the friendly association with another or with others.

This morning John will give us a new insight into what Biblical fellowship is all about!

Our Approach to the Book!

Our Focus / Fellowship!

I. (1:1-2:2) The **CONDITION**

Necessary for Fellowship!

II. (2:3-27) The **CONDUCT**

Resulting from Fellowship!

III. (2:28-3:24) The **CHARACTERISTICS**

Produced by Fellowship!

IV. (4:1-21) The **CAUTIONS**

When Seeking Fellowship!

V. (5:1-21) The **CONSEQUENCES**

Of True Biblical Fellowship!

The Setting of I John!

The Time of the Writing!

The time of the book's writing is greatly debated.

But most biblical scholars believe that it was written sometime after the Gospel of John and before the persecution of Christians that began under Emperor Domitian in the late 80s or early 90s AD. At the time of the writing of I John, the apostle John is an old man approaching death.

The Setting of I John!

The Place of the Writing!

While the exact location is unknown, the early church fathers (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius) state that it was written while John was pastoring the church in Ephesus (Asia Minor). It should be noted that the letter's sermon-like style helps support this position.

The City of Ephesus in Asia Minor

The Map!



The Scene!

Is that of an aged apostle named John, standing all alone, giving pastoral direction to believers under *spiritual attack*, while living in Asia Minor.



The Spiritual Attacks!

From Without:

The Nero Persecutions began in 64AD.
The Domitian Persecutions began in 81AD.



The Emperor Domitian!

Domitian was by nature a very evil and cruel leader. During his fits of rage, he slew his brother and even put to death several members of the Roman Senate. Because of his desire to be worshiped, he ordered the persecution of Christians because they worshipped another King. He proclaimed that “no Christian, once brought before the tribunal, should be exempt from punishment without renouncing his religion.” After crucifying Simeon, the bishop of Jerusalem, he had John boiled in oil, and afterward banished him to Patmos.

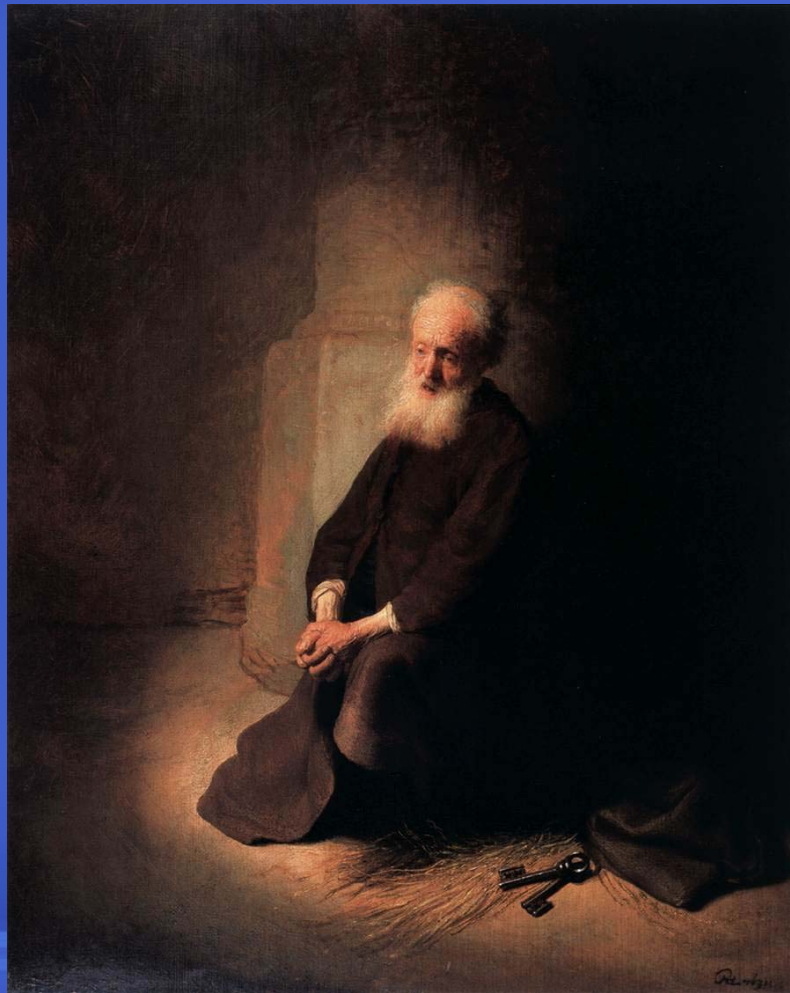
John's Persecution by Domitian

John Being Boiled In Oil!



John's Persecution by Domitian

John Exiled on Patmos



The Spiritual Attacks on the Church!

From Within:

Heretics had entered the churches throughout Asia Minor and were challenging the basic truths of the gospel – the Person and work of Christ! Their attacks were built on a philosophy known as “Gnosticism.” This philosophy was derived from the teachings of Plato. The gnostic (knowledgeable one) claimed to have special insight into the truth about Jesus. Because of this knowledge they demanded the church’s allegiance and obedience .

The Spiritual Attacks!

Gnosticism:

Held the belief that all matter was inherently evil and that the spirit of man was inherently good. And since Jesus was inherently good, He was pure spirit and not man, since the flesh was inherently evil.

1. Since matter is evil, why would Jesus take on a human, and sinful form?
2. Since Jesus was totally sinless, He had to be pure spirit.
3. Therefore, Jesus only appeared to be a man so that those overcome by sinful flesh, could behold that which is truly spiritual or pure.

The Spiritual Struggle!

The believers, many still new in their faith, began to struggle as they reasoned through the logic being taught by the gnostic. They had experienced first hand, the sinful pulling away of the flesh to do evil. And at the same time, they longed for the purity of the spirit.

The result ...

1. That which was considered spiritual, quickly became associated with the mind (since the mind held special knowledge). Thus, a person's spiritual maturity was linked to his intellect. And knowledge became identified with spiritual maturity.
2. Because of their desire to seek the purity of the spirit, they feed the sinfulness of the flesh. Their thinking was this. Once the desires of the flesh has been met and satisfied, the spirit would be freed up to search for the things of God. The logic? The end would justify the Means! So they ate, and drank, and enjoyed the lusts of the flesh to satisfy its desires so that the spirit would not be hindered.