

1 John: Exploring the Word



Week 3: 1 John 3:1-4:6

Last week's lesson ended with 1 John's warning the faithful against the shame that would come from trading Christ, who has given infinite good, for the “new teaching,” which promises much but delivers little. In the first three verses of 1 John 3, how does the writer wrap up that warning against false teaching?

1 John 3:4-10 is one of the most troubling paragraphs in the New Testament when separated from its context. Remembering the antichrist situation that John is addressing, why does this stark commentary on the conduct of teachers make sense in that context? In what ways does the root meaning of *hamartia* (“missing the mark”) help us to read this in a way that still affirms grace, and how do these claims line up with the claims about sin and sinning in 1 John 1 and 2?

In 1 John 3:11-17, how does the text connect the images of eternal life and the love of God? How does this counsel about the antichrist party connect with the four big images (light, fellowship, love, and commandment) from the first chapter of 1 John?

1 John 3:19-24 restates, just in case you missed it before, what Jesus commands. What is it? What relationship between the heart and God does 1 John lay out in this passage? How can we know that God abides within us?

When 1 John turns to “testing the spirits” in chapter 4, what does that phrase seem to mean? What is the test by which the faithful can discern among spirits? What connections are there between the big four images and the teaching here?