

I John 1:1-7 (New International Version)

<sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, 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. <sup>2</sup>The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup>We proclaim to you what 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, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We write this to make our<sup>(a)</sup> joy complete.

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. <sup>7</sup>But 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<sup>(b)</sup> sin.

**Footnotes:**

- a. I John 1:4 some manuscripts *your*
- b. I John 1:7 Or *every*

## **OASIS: Living Deep: 1 John 1:1-7**

*Preface: Welcome to our I John “Living Deep” Bible studies. These studies will be published twice a month, at the start of each LIFE Community week (see the LC schedule), and will be uploaded onto the GC “Sermon” webpage by the middle of Sunday afternoon. You can also obtain each study earlier on that Sunday morning in the OASIS course (11 am in the Adult Learning Center).*

*This set of studies will proceed sequentially through the entire book of I John, and will consist of 8 studies from September to January. The studies as a whole are designed to complement the fall message series, but the study passages will not be identical to the texts used in the message series on a given Sunday (these are not sermon discussions). However, we expect that people will derive great benefit from accessing both the Sunday messages and the LC studies. We expect that the combination will make for a dynamic duo—and deliver transformational value to the people in our LIFE Communities! (Please n.b. that items in italics are for benefit of LC study leaders.)*

*Background notes to I John: Note also that at the end of this study, you can find a brief set of notes that explain something of the backdrop of I John. LC Leaders may find this useful research.*

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Possible starter question: Let’s use our imagination for a moment. What do you suppose or imagine are some of the same things—ideas, issues, struggles—that early-church Christians might have in common with Christians today? Let’s make a quick list. What is one? Another one? ...

Transitional comment: This fall we are going to study the little book of I John: It was written to Christians in the second half of the 1st century. I think we will be surprised and deeply helped by how relevant this letter is for our lives today.

→ Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study (if you haven’t already prayed)

Read and Overview observations:

Let’s listen as someone reads our passage aloud.

→ Now, take several minutes by yourself to study this passage. Look for repeated words and ideas. Note major contrasts.

O Let people share what they saw—3-5 minutes about repeated words and ideas, and key contrasts.

First Section (v. 1-4):

O Let’s look at John’s opening section, often called the “prologue.” What does John want the readers to know about his involvement?

*(n.b. “we”: Unlikely that John was co-authoring this letter. More likely that he is using a “royal we” that refers to the shared experience that he and the others who were among “the Twelve” had. Sort of an “apostolic we.”)*

O What does John explain and imply about “the life” in the 3 usages here?

I What intrigues you about these insights into this?

- O What reasons does John give for why he is writing to them?
- I What does he want for his readers (which includes us)? In what way might John's joy be made complete?

A Based on this prologue, what do you hope (or expect) that John will develop more fully later in this letter? (*n.b. This isn't a true application question, but I am not sure what to call it!*)

Second Section (v. 5-7):

- O What is the message that John is communicating? What do we learn about God?
- I Why might this message need to be reiterated to people who already are Christians?
- O What is the nature of the problem in v. 6 that John identifies?
- I What do you think the phrase "walk in the darkness" means?

A What are some of the ways that we can sometimes "walk" in this?

- O What contrasts does John make in v. 7? What hopes and expectations does he have for us?

*(n.b. The next study will delve deeply into sin and the ways God purifies us, so don't feel you need to elaborate on this now. Tell them to look forward to our next study.)*

Summary

A Any good challenges for you or your LIFE Community got your attention in what we have just covered?

Prayer together: that our time together will help us live deeper in God and in fellowship with one another.

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**Introduction to I John** (my summary of Leon Morris, in New Bible Commentary, Revised):

- I. Type of literature?
  - a. Letter? Neither greeting or signature
  - b. Perhaps a written sermon?
  - c. Proposal: a letter with unusual features; intended for more than 1 community
- II. Authorship:
  - a. John the apostle: contains marked tone of authority; affirmed by ancient traditions; style and thought forms resembles those of 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel; was eyewitness of Jesus. This is the most reasonable hypothesis.
  - b. Alternative suggestions are weak but include: written by co-authors; or a mysterious John the Elder (who more likely was the same John the apostle).
- III. Occasion/context:
  - a. Readers being confronted with false teaching (denial of incarnation)
  - b. Readers being misguided away from the importance of righteous living.

- c. John needs to assure believers of their salvation and call to loving relationships.
- IV. Date:
- a. Very little by which to specifically date this writing, other than late 1<sup>st</sup> century.
  - b. Best options range as early as AD 60 to the end of the first century.

Text notes (you can access biblical texts via [www.Biblegateway.com](http://www.Biblegateway.com))

- a. BIG idea: When we are united with Jesus, we can live deeply—lives characterized by fellowship, joy and spiritual progress.
- b. Key verse/idea: I John 1:6: **“If we walk in the light...”**
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge)

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? What more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you’ll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words that are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn’t make sense to you, then discard it.) You want to “own” each question.
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. How long do you wait? Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Otherwise, other texts will push you more into the “teacher role,” rather than that of facilitator. It also can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this “on-line” study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.