

Bible Class Materials and Questions

1 John through Jude

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1 John – Overview: Purpose and Themes

1. Which five New Testament books did John write?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

2. Tell his purposes in writing 1 John from . . .
 - 1 John 1:3 –
 - 1 John 1:4 –
 - 1 John 2:1 –
 - 1 John 5:13 (may tell *two* purposes, depending on your translation) –

3. Compare these purposes to his purposes in writing his account of the gospel. (John 20:30-31)

4. (*This next part might take 20 minutes or so.*) Read the five chapters of 1 John. Try to scan/read to capture the basic ideas, without getting bogged down in difficult phrases. As you go, jot down verse numbers of individual verses or sections (maybe *large* sections) which touch on the following:

<i>Key word, “know”</i> (Occurs almost 40 times in over 30 verses)			<i>Key idea, the goal of not sinning</i>	<i>Key idea, loving each other</i>
			<i>Repeated idea, “antichrists”</i>	

1 John 1

1. To what is the author referring in the first four verses? (*Hint: See v. 5*)
2. The author is not simply an *eyewitness* of the things about which he writes. What other senses does the author employ to confirm?
3. Match the phrases on the left (from 1 John) to passages in the Gospel of John on the right:

a. From the beginning	___ John 1:4; 11:25-26 <i>What event?</i>
b. We have seen with our eyes	___ John 1:1 (<i>said three times</i>)
c. Our hands have handled	___ John 1:1, 2; 8:58
d. The Word	___ John 20:24-27 <i>What event?</i>
e. ... of Life/eternal life	___ John 17:20-23 <i>What event?</i>
f. Fellowship with us (apostles) and with the Father and His Son	___ John 1:14, 18
4. 1 John 1:9, as well as Romans 10:9-10, mention confession of sins leading to forgiveness (or salvation). Other passages such as Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 say that baptism is necessary. Identify the most basic reason for this difference. (*Hint: Think of the passages' contexts.*)
5. Circle the example of conversion in the book of Acts which illustrates the difference mentioned in question #4. (**Jews** on Pentecost, chapter 2; **Samaritans**, chap. 8; **Simon**, chap. 8; **Ethiopian**, chap. 8; **Saul**, chap. 9; **Cornelius**, chap 10; **Lydia**, chap. 16; **jailer**, chap. 16; **Corinthians**, chap. 18; **Ephesians**, chap. 19) Comment on how this difference is seen in the example.
6. We can “confess” that we believe in Jesus as the Son of God. We can also “confess” our sins. Sort the following passages about “confession” by marking the column to which it belongs.

Confession...	of faith	of sins
Matthew 10:32-33		
Acts 19:18		
Romans 10:9-10		
The “good confession” of Timothy (1 Timothy 6:12) and Jesus (v. 13)		
James 5:16		
1 John 1:9		

7. “Public” versus “private” confession. When should we confess our sins to other people, instead of only to God? Support your answer.
8. When we decide we need to make a *public* confession of sins, how do we determine whether we should tell the whole church, rather than just a Christian friend or two? Support your answer.
9. Describe how a public confession of sins might be conducted.
10. Does walking in the light mean we never sin? (I.e., does one sin mean we’re walking in darkness?) Support your answer from 1 John 1.

Fellowship

1. With whom does the author of 1 John want us to have fellowship (1:3)?
2. According to verse 6, what prevents us from having fellowship with God?
3. According to verse 7, what blessings come to those who walk in the light?

Fellowship: A word study

The term “fellowship” in the New Testament comes from two Greek words, κοινωνία, <koinonia> and μετοχή <metoche>. <Metoche> appears only once (2 Corinthians 6:14) and is translated “fellowship.” Any given word in one language can almost always be translated in more than one way, and its related word <metochos> appears seven times and is translated “partaker” (5 times), “fellow,” and “partner.”

In the case of <koinonia>, which appears 20 times, it is usually translated “**fellowship**” in the New King James Version (e.g., 1 Corinthians 10:20, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Ephesians 5:11, Philippians 3:10, and verses in the section below), and also as “**contribution**” (Romans 15:26), “**communion**” (1 Corinthians 10:16; 2 Corinthians 13:14), and “**sharing/share**.” (2 Corinthians 9:13; Philemon 6; Hebrews 13:16) The King James Version, once each, uses “**communication**,” “**to communicate**,” and “**distribution**.” The related word, <koinonos>, is translated “**partaker**” (five times), “**partner**” (three times), and “**companion**” (once).

4. Read the passages on the left (in their contexts, of course) about “**fellowship**” <koinonia>, and match them to their meaning on the right. Be prepared to talk about the similarities and differences between these concepts.

a. 1 Corinthians 1:9; Ephesians 3:9; Philippians 2:1; 3:10; 1 John 1:3, 6	___ a joint participation or partnership in ministering to needy saints
b. Acts 2:42; Galatians 2:9; 1 John 1:3, 7	___ a joint participation or partnership with the saints in supporting the preaching of the gospel
c. Philippians 1:5; compare 4:10-18	___ a communion with God
d. 2 Corinthians 8:4; compare 2 Corinthians 9:12-13	___ a spiritual communion with the saints

5. In the denominational world, what is the function of a “fellowship hall”?
6. *Supply the verses to fill in the blanks.*
While Christians may *eat* (“keep company”) with unbelievers (1 Corinthians 5: _____), Christians have **no** “fellowship” with unbelievers! (2 Corinthians 6: _____)
7. Use English letters to spell out the Greek word for “fellowship” in 1 John 1:3, 7.

8. From 1 Corinthians 5:11 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, what do we withdraw from our disorderly brothers and sisters, in extreme cases? (*Hint: It’s not ‘fellowship.’*)

Gnosticism, Part I: Overview

(This study material – especially any statements about Gnostic beliefs – is based primarily on an article by a Gnostic Bishop at <http://www.gnosis.org/gnintro.htm>. Additional quotes and historical and comparative information was gleaned from an article by a Roman Catholic at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06592a.htm>, both downloaded 8/03/08. The organization, comments and interspersed questions are mine. -- GC)

Gnosticism is a system of beliefs that has been around **since before the time of Christ**. (Note, though, that Judaism is much older, with writings dating back to the time of Moses, about 1,500 B.C..) The **five factors detailed below** make Gnostic beliefs very **difficult to pin down**. This result actually fits well with one of its basic tenets, namely, that only certain people can attain to the understanding of the special knowledge that will help them reunite with their god. (The Greek word, “Gnosis” means “knowledge.”)

Syncretistic

Define “syncretistic” _____

It is said that Gnosticism “unites and reconciles the recognitions of Monotheism and Polytheism, as well as of Theism, Deism and Pantheism.” Any efforts to combine such drastically different (diametrically opposed!) beliefs will naturally be artificial and forced and will vary among the people attempting the task.

Mysterious

Simply stated, its rites and ceremonies are not public information. Gnostics apparently do some activities which are reminiscent of other religions’ worship services, but their unique theology gives these practices a whole other meaning.

Gnosticism purposefully couches itself in language from which it is difficult to derive meaning. Perhaps better stated, Gnosticism – which “Gnostic myths express in their distinctively poetic and imaginative language” – would prefer not be put into words at all!

“Gnosticism expresses a specific religious experience, an experience that does not lend itself to the language of theology or philosophy, but which is instead closely affinitized to, and expresses itself through, the medium of myth. Indeed, one finds that most Gnostic scriptures take the forms of myths. The term “myth” should not here be taken to mean “stories that are not true”, but rather, that the truths embodied in these myths are of a different order from the dogmas of theology or the statements of philosophy.”

Subjective

Gnosticism rests on a personal religious experience. Its beliefs are intended to be “interior” and “intuitive.” To a certain extent, this makes any effort to study it objectively... futile, and any attempt to teach it to others... fairly pointless, as well! A critic will likely be told that s/he is misinterpreting one of the “myths.” Of course, one huge irony here is that in a subjective religion, who’s to say that *you* are the enlightened one and that *your* idea is better than mine? And one logical outcome of taking a subjective approach is that each adherent’s experience will look potentially very different.

Without a Standard

While it has many writings from its proponents, it has **no written standard** setting forth its beliefs. For that matter, it has no *oral* standard, either. (In other words, it is *not* a determined, well defined teaching that is simply trying to be passed down orally from generation to generation.) Gnosticism is represented in a large library of writings, which was greatly augmented by the discovery of the Nag Hammadi (a city in upper Egypt) “library” in 1945 (about a dozen scrolls in glass jars which were dug up in a field). Their writings include various “gospels” (“Of the Twelve,” “Of Peter,” “Of Philip,” “Of Matthias,” “Of Thomas,” “Of Mary,” “According to the Egyptians”) and several books of “Acts” (“Of Peter,” “Of Andrew,” “Of John,” “Of Thomas”) as well as several oriental writings (including one large collection) of gnostic writings unrelated to Christianity.

Because Gnosticism is **subjective** and **has no written standard**, it is also **flexible**, adapting its approach to the prevailing culture. Regarding guidance given to help the follower know how to conduct himself/herself, we find this: “The present period of Western culture perhaps resembles in more ways that of second and third century Alexandria. It seems therefore appropriate that Gnostics in our age adopt the attitudes of classical Alexandrian Gnosticism, wherein matters of conduct were largely left to the insight of the individual.”

Open to Interpretation

Gnosticism is not the only religious system that has been taught in many **schools of thoughts** down through the centuries. Other religions, though, typically have a written standard from the various schools start, so a new-comer to the religion can at least choose a school of thought which seems most consistent with his or her understanding of the standard. Remember, though, that Gnosticism is by definition intuitive and subjective, so we again come up against the problem that there is no basis for claiming that one way of thinking is better than another.

There seem to have been four primary gnostic schools of thought: *Syrian* (or *Semitic*), *Hellenistic* (or *Alexandrian*), *Dualistic*, and *Antinomian* schools) The schools taught/teach contradictory lessons on basically all points, from cosmology to “salvation” to individual behavior. In order to give a flavor of the different teachings, here is simply one example from two of the schools regarding personal conduct:

Syrian: “We obey the Supreme Deity by abstaining from flesh meat and marriage, and by leading an ascetic life.”

Antinomian: “As a moral law was given by the God of the Jews, and opposition to the God of the Jews was a duty, the breaking of the moral law to spite its give [giver – GC] was considered a solemn obligation. Such a sect, called the Nicolaites, existed in Apostolic times... One could only escape the cosmic powers through discharging one's obligations to them by infamous conduct. To disregard all law and sink oneself into the Monad by remembering one's pre-existence in the Cosmic Unit – such was the Gnosis of Carpocrates. His son Epiphanes followed his father's doctrine so closely that he died in consequence of his sins at the age of seventeen.”

Describe the general difference in conduct which will result from following these two schools of thought.

Define “ascetic(ism).” _____

Circle the Bible passage(s) that teach(es) against the ascetic approach.

Colossians 2:20-23; Ecclesiastes 2:24-25; 1 Timothy 4:1-5

Circle the Bible passage(s) that teach(es) against the Antinomian approach.

1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 Peter 2:11-12; Galatians 5:19-21

On the left are the **factors that make Gnosticism difficult to pin down**.

Match them to the OPPOSITE concepts on the right.

a. Syncretistic	_____ Revealed and publicized
b. Mysterious	_____ Based on a fixed and written doctrine
c. Subjective	_____ Deviations constitute apostasy
d. Without a Standard	_____ Truth is objective; experiences are the same for all followers
e. Open to Interpretation	_____ Exclusive of certain ideas

Now take those **concepts that are opposed to Gnosticism** (from the left), and match them to the group of Bible verses which teach them (on the right).

a. Revealed and publicized	_____ Proverbs 3:5-6; 10 examples in Acts; Romans 6:17; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 7:17
b. Based on a fixed, written doctrine	_____ Galatians 1:6-8; 2 John 9
c. Deviations constitute apostasy	_____ 1 John 1:2-5; Ephesians 3:5; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 1:16-17
d. Truth is objective; experiences are the same for all followers	_____ John 14:6; Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
e. Exclusive of certain ideas	_____ Ephesians 2:19-20; Ephesians 3:3b-4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible, on “**knowledge**”: Match the concept to the passage which teaches it.

a. Knowledge can make us arrogant, and in this way, is the opposite of love.	_____ Matthew 13:10-15
b. The gospel is not for the intellectual or the wise in their own opinion.	_____ 1 Corinthians 1:18-21
c. The gospel is for those who love truth.	_____ 1 Corinthians 8:1
d. The gospel is intended for those with a simple trust in God	_____ 1 Corinthians 2:11-16
e. The truth is revealed in words (language)	_____ 2 Thessalonians 2:12

Gnosticism, Part II: Major Beliefs

As you read this article from a Gnostic Bishop, answer the questions to form a biblical response. The key concepts being questioned are underlined simply to help you find the Gnostic statements. Omitted statements are marked by "...". (For the full article, see the reference under Part I.) Because Gnosticism has generated much of its own vocabulary which is unfamiliar to Bible students, a dictionary may also help.

The Cosmos

All religious traditions acknowledge that the world is imperfect. Where they differ is in the explanations which they offer to account for this imperfection and in what they suggest might be done about it. Gnostics have their own – perhaps quite startling – view of these matters: they hold that the world is flawed because it was created in a flawed manner.

Like Buddhism, Gnosticism begins with the fundamental recognition that earthly life is filled with suffering. In order to nourish themselves, all forms of life consume each other, thereby visiting pain, fear, and death upon one another (even herbivorous animals live by destroying the life of plants)....

Many religions advocate that humans are to be blamed for the imperfections of the world. Supporting this view, they interpret the Genesis myth as declaring that transgressions committed by the first human pair brought about a “fall” of creation resulting in the present corrupt state of the world. Gnostics respond that this interpretation of the myth is false. The blame for the world’s failings lies not with humans, but with the creator. ...

Q: What is the Bible’s assessment, according to the Creator, of the creation? (Hint: It’s stated seven times, in Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.)

Ways of evading the recognition of the flawed creation and its flawed creator have been devised over and over, but none of these arguments have impressed Gnostics. ...

Once the initial shock of the “unusual” or “blasphemous” nature of the Gnostic explanation for suffering and imperfection of the world wears off, one may begin to recognize that it is in fact the most sensible of all explanations. To appreciate it fully, however, a familiarity with the Gnostic conception of the Godhead is required, both in its original essence as the True God and in its debased manifestation as the false or creator God.

Deity

... In the Gnostic view, there is a true, ultimate and transcendent God, who is beyond all created universes and who never created anything in the sense in which the word “create” is ordinarily understood. While this True God did not fashion or create anything, He (or, It) “emanated” or brought forth from within Himself the substance of all there is in all the

worlds, visible and invisible. In a certain sense, it may therefore be true to say that all is God, for all consists of the substance of God. By the same token, it must also be recognized that many portions of the original divine essence have been projected so far from their source that they underwent unwholesome changes in the process. ...

Q: Using a dictionary, define “emanate.”

The basic Gnostic myth has many variations, but all of these refer to Aeons, intermediate deific beings who exist between the ultimate, True God and ourselves. They, together with the True God, comprise the realm of Fullness (Pleroma) wherein the potency of divinity operates fully. The Fullness stands in contrast to our existential state, which in comparison may be called emptiness.

Three Bible passages about “pleroma” (“fulness”):

Q: Colossians pictures Jesus Christ as the eternal Creator.

According to Colossians 1:19, where does all “fulness” dwell?

Q: According to Colossians 2:9, in what form does the “fulness” dwell?

Q: According to John 1:16, who partakes of His “fulness”?

One of the aeonial beings who bears the name Sophia (“Wisdom”) is of great importance to the Gnostic world view. In the course of her journeyings, Sophia came to emanate from her own being a flawed consciousness, a being who became the creator of the material and psychic cosmos, all of which he created in the image of his own flaw. This being, unaware of his origins, imagined himself to be the ultimate and absolute God. Since he took the already existing divine essence and fashioned it into various forms, he is also called the Demiurgos or “half-maker” There is an authentic half, a true deific component within creation, but it is not recognized by the half-maker and by his cosmic minions, the Archons or “rulers”.

Q: Does God’s name, given in Exodus 3:14, allow for Him to have emanated from anyone else?

Q: Does 1 John 1:5 allow for the existence of a “flaw” in the God of the Bible?

Review what they’re saying:

Q: According to Gnosticism, who is “Sophia”?

Q: According to Gnosticism, describe the origin of Demiurgos (the “Demiurge”).

Q: According to Gnosticism, what is another name for him?

Q: According to Gnosticism, what did the Demiurgos do?

Q: According to Gnosticism, what is another name for the cosmic minions (“rulers”) of the Demiurge?

The Human Being

Human nature mirrors the duality found in the world: in part it was made by the false creator God and in part it consists of the light of the True God. Humankind contains a perishable physical and psychic component, as well as a spiritual component which is a fragment of the divine essence. This latter part is often symbolically referred to as the “divine spark”. ...

Q: Is the human soul PART of God, or does it constitute a separate being? Support your answer (E.g., from 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10, 1 Corinthians 15:35-49, etc.).

Humans are generally ignorant of the divine spark resident within them. This ignorance is fostered in human nature by the influence of the false creator and his Archons, who together are intent upon keeping men and women ignorant of their true nature and destiny. Anything that causes us to remain attached to earthly things serves to keep us in enslavement to these lower cosmic rulers. Death releases the divine spark from its lowly prison, but if there has not been a substantial work of Gnosis undertaken by the soul prior to death, it becomes likely that the divine spark will be hurled back into, and then re-embodied within, the pangs and slavery of the physical world.

Q: Who in the Bible account accused God of trying to prevent humans from attaining higher knowledge? (Hint: Garden of Eden) _____ What did he say?

Q: According to the Bible, what happens to the souls of the unenlightened upon their death? Support your answer. (E.g., from John 5:28-29)

Q: Does the Bible leave room for the concept of reincarnation? (E.g., in Luke 16)

Not all humans are spiritual (pneumatics) and thus ready for Gnosis and liberation. Some are earthbound and materialistic beings (hyletics), who recognize only the physical reality. Others live largely in their psyche (psychics). Such people usually mistake the Demiurge for the True God and have little or no awareness of the spiritual world beyond matter and mind.

In the course of history, humans progress from materialistic sensate slavery, by way of ethical religiosity, to spiritual freedom and liberating Gnosis. As the scholar G. Quispel wrote: “The world-spirit in exile must go through the Inferno of matter and the Purgatory of morals to arrive at the spiritual Paradise.” This kind of evolution of consciousness was envisioned by the Gnostics....

Salvation

Evolutionary forces alone are insufficient, however, to bring about spiritual freedom. Humans are caught in a predicament consisting of physical existence combined with ignorance of their true origins, their essential nature and their ultimate destiny. To be liberated from this predicament, human beings require help, although they must also contribute their own efforts.

From earliest times Messengers of the Light have come forth from the True God in order to assist humans in their quest for Gnosis. Only a few of these salvific figures are mentioned in Gnostic scripture; some of the most important are Seth (the third Son of Adam), Jesus, and the Prophet Mani. The majority of Gnostics always looked to Jesus as the principal savior figure (the Soter).

Q: According to Hebrews 1:1-2, Jesus is not simply another in a long line of prophets. How does that text describe Him?

Gnostics do not look to salvation from sin (original or other), but rather from the ignorance of which sin is a consequence. Ignorance – whereby is meant ignorance of spiritual realities – is dispelled only by Gnosis, and the decisive revelation of Gnosis is brought by the Messengers of Light, especially by Christ, the Logos of the True God. It is not by His suffering and death but by His life of teaching and His establishing of mysteries that Christ has performed His work of salvation.

Q: Describe Jesus' work of salvation, according to Romans 5:6-11.

Q: According to Ephesians 4:11-16, how is ignorance overcome?

Q: According to John 8:31-32, how is spiritual freedom achieved?

... Gnosis and salvation can be, indeed must be, stimulated and facilitated in order to effectively arise within consciousness. This stimulation is supplied by Messengers of Light

who, in addition to their teachings, establish salvific mysteries (sacraments) which can be administered by apostles of the Messengers and their successors.

Q: Rather than trying to establish mysteries, what was the role of Jesus' apostles and prophets? (See Ephesians 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:10-12.)

More about Jesus (adapted from material at www.MarkCopeland.net)

“Gnostics”...

1. Claimed to have a superior knowledge,
2. Shrouded their teachings and practices in privileged secrecy, and
3. Believed that the “True” God did not create or have anything to do with the material universe.

Therefore ...

- a) All matter is evil, and
- b) Christ could not have come in the flesh.

*Q: What does **1 John 4:1-3** say about such a claim?*

There were differing views about Jesus. One branch of gnosticism, **Docetism** (from the Greek <dokein>, “to seem”), said that Jesus only “seemed” to be physical.

*Q: How does **1 John 1:1** contradict this?*

Cerinthus taught that “Jesus” was physical, but that the “Christ” came upon him at his baptism, and left before his death, so the “Christ-spirit” never suffered.

*Q: How does **1 John 5:6** contradict this?*

One needs also remember that knowledge of our true nature – as well as other associated realizations – are withheld from us by our very condition of earthly existence. The True God of transcendence is unknown in this world, in fact He is often called the Unknown Father. It is thus obvious that revelation from on High is needed to bring about salvation. The indwelling spark must be awakened from its terrestrial slumber by the saving knowledge that comes “from without”.

Q: According to Acts 17, how did Paul respond to worshippers of “The Unknown God”?

Conduct

If the words “ethics” or “morality” are taken to mean a system of rules, then Gnosticism is opposed to them both. Such systems usually originate with the Demiurge and are covertly designed to serve his purposes. If, on the other hand, morality is said to consist of an inner integrity arising from the illumination of the indwelling spark, then the Gnostic will embrace this spiritually informed existential ethic as ideal.

Q: Give an example of a Bible passage which sets forth a “system of rules” to govern people’s conduct.

To the Gnostic, commandments and rules are not salvific; they are not substantially conducive to salvation. Rules of conduct may serve numerous ends, including the structuring of an ordered and peaceful society, and the maintenance of harmonious relations within social groups. Rules, however, are not relevant to salvation; that is brought about only by Gnosis. Morality therefore needs to be viewed primarily in temporal and secular terms; it is ever subject to changes and modifications in accordance with the spiritual development of the individual....

Q: According to 1 John 4:21 – 5:3, what role do God’s commandments play?

Destiny

... Death does not automatically bring about liberation from bondage in the realms of the Demiurge. Those who have not attained to a liberating Gnosis while they were in embodiment may become trapped in existence once more. It is quite likely that this might occur by way of the cycle of rebirths. Gnosticism does not emphasize the doctrine of reincarnation prominently, but it is implicitly understood in most Gnostic teachings that those who have not made effective contact with their transcendental origins while they were in embodiment would have to return into the sorrowful condition of earthly life.

In regard to salvation, or the fate of the spirit and soul after death, one needs to be aware that help is available. Valentinus, the greatest of Gnostic teachers, taught that Christ and Sophia await the spiritual man – the pneumatic Gnostic – at the entrance of the Pleroma, and help him to enter the bridechamber of final reunion. Ptolemaeus, disciple of Valentinus, taught that even those not of pneumatic status, the psychics, could be redeemed and live in a heavenworld at the entrance of the Pleroma. In the fullness of time, every spiritual being will receive Gnosis and will be united with its higher Self – the angelic Twin – thus becoming qualified to enter the Pleroma. None of this is possible, however, without earnest striving for Gnosis.

1 John 2

What is an “advocate” (v. 1)?

What is a “propitiation” (v. 2)?

A major teaching of Calvinists is that Christ offered only a *limited atonement*. Find a verse in this chapter that refutes that doctrine.

From verses 3-5, tell two things about the person who keeps God’s commandment/word.

- a.
- b.

Did the word of God change much from the time Jesus walked on the earth to the time John wrote *1 John*? _____ How do we know (from this chapter)?

From verses 9-11, in what condition is a person who hates his brother?

How (from this context) do we know that this is referring to *spiritual* brothers and sisters?

Match the passages to the sense in which they use the word “world”:

a. The physical creation	___ Matthew 13:38; James 2:5; Romans 3:6
b. All humanity	___ 2 Peter 3:6; John 17:5; Ephesians 1:4
c. The realm of sin(ners)	___ 1 John 2:15; John 17:14; James 1:27

If someone loves the world, what is crowded out from his/her heart? (1 John 2:15; cp. Matthew 6:24.)

On the left, list the three things that are in the world.

In the middle, tell how Eve (in Genesis 3:6) fell in each case.

On the right, list the temptations that Jesus overcame (in Matthew 4:1-11) in each case.

1 John 2:16	Eve – Genesis 3:6	Jesus – Matthew 4:1-11

Again list the three things that are in the world. This time, tell which is more of a problem for *young people*, which affects the *middle aged*, and which might bother *older people*. Then give a specific example or two of those kinds of temptations.

Types of Temptation	Stages of Life (<i>Circle one</i>)	Examples
	Youth – Middle age – Old age	
	Youth – Middle age – Old age	
	Youth – Middle age – Old age	

According to the Bible, is there *one* Antichrist, or *more than one*? Support your answer.

Define (from a regular dictionary) “advent.” _____

Tell the time for the advent of the Antichrist(s). (And, as always, support your answer.)

List at least two verses in this chapter which make it clear that John was writing, in part, in order to refute false teaching.

Tell a very sobering aspect of the origins of false teaching from verse 19 (that is similar to a point made in Acts 20:30).

From the standpoint of Gnosticism (as described in the previous lesson), how would some say that Jesus is not the Christ?

And, how would they “deny” the Father?

Which came first, the *true gospel stories*, or the *gnostic twists on the gospel*? Support your answer from this chapter.

What is the basic promise of the gospel?

How is this similar to the gnostic’s hope?

How is it different?

1 John 3

1 John 2:28 – 3:3

What does John want us to “behold” or “see” in 1 John 3:1? (Try to express this in your own words in as few words as possible, maybe 5-7 words.)

Find a verse in *the Gospel of John, chapter 3* that calls our attention to the same thing with the word “so.”

A Christian has “hope” that what will happen?

What attitude accompanies this hope?

What has to happen in order for us to realize this hope?

1 John 3:4-9

Tell the main point of this paragraph as it relates to us being children of God.

Sin is _____.

Find verses in other books that tell us that Jesus never sinned.

2 Corinthians 5:____; Hebrews 4:____; 1 Peter 2:____

Find verses in 1 Peter 1 and Luke 8 that tell us about “seed.”

1 Peter 1:____ and Luke 8:____ say that the “seed” is _____.

According to 1 John 3:8, what did Jesus accomplish by coming in human form and living sinlessly? (Compare Hebrews 2:14.)

1 John 3:10-15

Tell the main point of this paragraph as it relates to us being children of God.

What two things do people who are “of God” do?

- a.
- b.

Read Hebrews 11:4 and Genesis 4:1-8.

What made Abel’s offering “works” righteous?

What made Cain's *offering* unacceptable?

What made Cain's *attitude* unacceptable?

Make the connection according to 1 John 3:10 and 12.

1 John 3:16-24

To what extreme will our love for our brothers and sisters (theoretically) go (v. 16)?

Why would we be willing to do such a thing?

To what action will our love for our brothers and sisters *practically* go (v. 17)?

Find other verses that make the same point: Matthew 25: ____; James 2: _____

List passages in Acts that show this in action: Acts 2: _____; Acts 4: _____

Verse 18 uses a special grammatical construction, "not... but."

Compare Matthew 10:34 and Acts 5:4, and then explain 1 John 3:18.

Verse 18 says for us to love "in deed and in truth." Describe how someone might love "in deed" but *not* "in truth."

What is the source of our confidence, according to 1 John 3:19, 21?

From Acts 23:1, tell why this *by itself* is not an adequate measure of our salvation.

Tell two of the Father's commandments, according to 1 John 3:23:

- a.
- b.

1 John 4

1 John 4:1-6

Many people claim to have the spirit of God. John warns us *not* to “believe every spirit” but rather to “test” them. Why? (*Hint*: Verses 1, 6)

Tell how Paul (in 1 Corinthians 12:10 and 14:29) expected the church to show such discernment even in a worship service characterized by miraculous and supernatural events.

Tell how the Bereans (in Acts 17:11) were praised for not accepting a message simply because someone important preached it.

Tell how Jesus (according to Matthew 7:21-23) will judge many religious people who claim to be doing great things by the spirit of God.

What is one basic test for anyone claiming to speak by the spirit of God? (1 John 4:2-3)

Where is the other section of 1 John that mentions the Antichrist?

1 John 4:1-6 makes what two similar points about the Antichrist?

a.

b.

1 John 4:1-6 adds what element of truth to the message to help us identify the Antichrist?

What is another basic test to distinguish between who is “of God,” according to verses 5-6?

1 John 4:7-11

A basic goal for a Christian is to “know” God. (Compare John 17:3.) Does this knowledge (in the context of 1 John 4:7) come primarily from *studying the truth*, or from *practicing the truth*?

Compare Jeremiah 22:15-16. Who knew God in the passage? (*Hint*: Verse 11)

How was that person’s *knowledge* of God demonstrated?

Tell the ultimate example of true love.

Tell what practical impact that has on us, according to this paragraph.

1 John 4:12-19

Tell two basic gospel facts from this paragraph.

- a.
- b.

Tell two things we do in response to those facts, according to this paragraph.

- a.
- b.

Tell two (or three) ways that our spirits change, according to this paragraph.

- a.
- b.
- c.

Answer these next questions from your own experience: (Circle one choice for each.)

Which is easier to describe, *something you see* (like a flower), or *something invisible* (like oxygen)?

Is it easier to imagine the power of a car if you *hear its engine*, or if you *hear someone tell about the sound of the engine*?

Is it easier to know how hard a rock is if you *touch it*, or if you *watch someone else touch it*?

Answer this next question from 1 John 4:20-21: (Circle one choice.)

Who is easier to love, *a person sitting in front of you*, or *God*?

From your own imagination or experience, tell some reasons we might be tempted to answer the other way.

God is Love

The Greek language uses four words for “love.” Only two of these (#3 and #4) appear in the New Testament.

English speakers talk about the same concepts, we just have to use more words and/or the context to clarify our meaning.

1. eros <έρως> **Romantic**, or passionate, love
2. storge <στοργη> **Natural** affection, especially between family members
3. phileō <φιλέω> Close **friendship**; admiration [Strong’s definition] To *be a friend to* (*fond of* an individual or an object), that is, *have affection* for (denoting *personal* attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling)
4. agape <ἀγάπη> **Active good will**; [Strong’s definition of the verb form, agapaō <ἀγαπάω>] To *love* (in a social or moral sense) embracing especially the judgment and the *deliberate* assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety.

Which word for love fits best? Write the number (1-4 from above) for each modern use of “love.”

“It was love (#___) at first sight.”

“She’s a good girl; she loves (#___) her mama.... Loves (#___) Jesus and (*loves* #___) America, too.... Loves (#___) horses and (*loves* #___) her boyfriend, too.” (*Free Falling*, by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers)

Husbands, love (#___) your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.... (Ephesians 5:25)

“Love (#___) your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)

How can you love someone without liking them?

Notice the exchange between Jesus and Peter in John 21.

Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, **do you love (#4) me** more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that **I love (#3) you.**” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶ He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, **do you love (#4) me?**” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that **I love (#3) you.**” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.”

¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, **do you love (#3) me?**” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “**Do you love (#3) me?**” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that **I love (#3) you.**” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

What significance might there be to how Jesus and Peter use the two words?

More about “agape”: Read **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**. First, write each word or phrase describing how love behaves, according to this passage. Then, for each item, tell how God showed/shows those characteristics. Finally, give a practical example of how *we* might put that characteristic of love into practice. The first one is done for you. (You may not be able to fill in *every* blank. Just do your best.)

<i>How Love Behaves</i>	<i>How God Showed (or Shows) Love</i>	<i>How We Might Show Love</i>
V. 4 - “Suffers long”	Waits, giving people a chance, even when it causes heartache – like in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:6; 1 Peter 3:20) and now (2 Peter 3:9)	Give someone who has hurt you a second chance
V. 4 -		
V. 5 -		
V. 6 -		
V. 6 -		
V. 7 -		
V. 8 -		

Just for perspective: The context of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 deals with the fact that *love* (#4) is superior to miraculous spiritual gifts because 1) *everyone* can love (while not everyone had miraculous gifts), and 2) *love will endure forever* (while miraculous gifts would cease).

1 John 5

1 John 5:1-5

This paragraph speaks more about the children of God and uses several related concepts, combining them in several ways. Fill in the blanks:

Our faith

God's children believe that Jesus is the _____ (one word)

God's children believe that Jesus is the _____ (phrase)

Our obedient love

Whoever loves the Father also loves _____

Whoever loves the Father also keeps _____

Part of doing *that* involves loving _____

Our beliefs and actions identify us as children of God and also grant us what enormous accomplishment?

“His commandments are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3)

Which passage(s) make(s) a similar point?

Joshua 24:19-20; Proverbs 4:18; Matthew 7:13-14; Matthew 11:28-30

How does this contradict the world's typical view of Christianity?

1 John 5:6-13

Tell an idea or two that might explain how Jesus came ...

by water

by blood

Think of a time in Jesus' life that involved both water and blood. (*Hint: Spear*)

Note that the bracketed words from verse 7 & 8 do not appear in many Greek manuscripts.

⁷ **For there are three that bear witness** [in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one. ⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth:] **the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three agree as one.**

Tell of an incident in the earthly life of Jesus that helps us know that the “trinity” exists, even *without* the bracketed words above. (*Hint: Dove*.)

How did God give testimony of His Son at that time?

Think of another event in the life of Jesus when the Father gave direct testimony regarding His Son. (*Hint: Moses and Elijah*.)

Where is eternal life found?

What confidence can a believer have?

1 John 5:14-17

What confidence can a believer have? (Yes, same question, different answer.)

How are some sins worse than others?

Physical consequences –

Spiritual consequences –

Is this passage referring to *physical death* or *spiritual death*?

How does this passage inform the discussion about whether or not a Christian can be lost?

If *some* sin is “*not to death*,” someone might conclude that it’s not big deal and can be ignored. However, what does this passage say should be done about such sins?

What should be done in the case of *any* sin? (Remember chapter 1.)

1 John 5:18-21

Tell what a believer knows, according to ...

- a. Verse 18, two things –
- b. Verse 19, two things –
- c. Verse 20, two things –

What does a believer *do*, according to verses 18 & 21?

Connect the great victory that comes from such behavior with an earlier verse (or verses) in this chapter.

Explain a connection between verse 21 and a phrase at the end of verse 20.

Explain a connection between verse 21 and an idea from earlier in 1 John. (*Hint*: 3 things in the world)

Review: Explain how the phrase “the True God” in v. 20 counters Gnostic teaching

2 John

1 John might be summarized as an encouragement to “walk in the light” and to “love one another.” How might 2 John be summarized?

Is the “elect lady” more likely an individual, or something else? Explain.

Describe the feeling “the elder” expresses in 2 John 1:4.

The apostle Paul expresses similar feelings in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20. Why would apostles feel that way?

When might we feel that way, too?

Find verses in John 13 and 15 similar to 2 John 1:5.

Find verses in 1 John 2 and 5 similar to 2 John 1:6.

Find a verse or two in 1 John 4 (and 1 John 2, if you wish) similar to 2 John 1:7.

2 John 1:9

Where does 1 John join the concept of fellowship with the Father with fellowship with the Son?

Find a section of John 8 that highlights the importance of us abiding in Jesus’ teaching.

Find a verse in Matthew 28 where Jesus speaks of the need for His disciples to obey His commandments.

Discuss how 2 John 1:9-11 speaks to both...

our fellowship _____

and our association _____

3 John

Is John writing this letter to an individual, or to a church. Explain.

Discuss a person's priorities as suggested by John's greeting in 3 John 1:2.

Find a verse in 2 John similar to 3 John 1:4.

3 John 1:5-8

How can we "become fellow workers for the truth" (v. 8)?

Find verses in Philippians 2 that speak of similar circumstances.

How could the word "Gentiles" in 3 John 1:7 be understood?

3 John 1:9-12

Was Diotrophes a member of the church?

Describe his attitude.

Tell of his actions. . . toward the apostles –

. . . toward other members of the church –

What might have happened (at least temporarily) to John's earlier letter?

John says that no one has seen God in 1 John 4:12. How does he suggest otherwise in 3 John 1:11?

Find a verse in John 14 that helps us understand 3 John 1:11.

What could be a summary statement for the book of 3 John?

Jude

Jude 1:1-2

Notes: The author was the brother of James. There were several Jameses and a couple of Judes or Judases in the N.T., and it's hard to keep them all straight. But the two brothers were apparently two of the four brothers of Jesus, Himself, listed in Matthew 13:55. James was the leader in the church mentioned in Acts 12:17 and in Acts 15, the same James who wrote the book of James. The brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him during his time on earth (John 7:5), but later believed and became leading teachers and prophets in the church. Both writers call themselves Jesus' bondservants in the first verse of their books.

List the three characteristics of Jude's audience.

- a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

We are "called" to _____ (Galatians 5:13), to _____ (Colossians 3:15),
and to _____ (1 Timothy 6:12).

We are called by the _____ to _____ (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

Our calling is a _____ calling (2 Timothy 1:9),
and we are to walk in a manner _____ of our calling. (Ephesians 4:1-3),
Matthew 22:14 says, "Many are called, but _____ are _____."

Those who answer the high calling of God are chosen and are set apart by Him to His service, in other words, _____ by God. They are also protected and maintained by God, or as Jude says, " _____ in Jesus Christ."

Find a verse in John 10 that speaks of Jesus' powerful protection of His people.

On the left, list the three blessings Jude pronounces on his audience. On the right, tell a benefit of each blessing in a Christian's life, from your own experience (or imagination).

Blessing	Benefit

Jude 1:3-4

How does Jude describe our salvation in verse 3? (*Single word*) _____

How does Jude describe the faith? (*Phrase*) _____

Write down a logical progression of thoughts from the following passages to show that there was no plan for any revelation from God after the time of the New Testament writers.

John 16:13 –

Ephesians 3:1-5 –

2 Peter 1:3/Jude 1:3 –

Find a verse in Galatians 1 that also supports this truth.

Notes: Mormons emphasize the teachings of Joseph Smith over the words of Jesus and teach that the Bible cannot be fully trusted without further revelation. Pentecostals and Catholics also rely heavily on modern-day revelations, saying in effect that God did not deliver a common salvation "once for all."

What is Jude's exhortation in verse 3?

Why did Jude find this topic necessary?

What does this mean for us?

Give a synonym for "exhort."

"Turn[ing] the grace of God into lewdness": Describe how an over-emphasis on God's grace can become a license to sin.

Find verses in Romans 6 that deal with this same topic.

Notes: Besides the ancient and modern Gnostics, there are also modern examples of people who "deny the Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ": Atheists and agnostics do not admit the existence of God. Jehovah's witnesses teach that Jesus was not equal to the Father and that Jesus was a created being rather than the Creator. Muslims and Jews teach that Jesus was a good teacher, but Jews claim He was not the Messiah and did not rise from the dead, and Muslims say He didn't actually die on the cross.

Jude 1:5-21

Tell some reasons Jude's audience may have forgotten – and why we surely do forget – truths that were once known.

Read the parallel passage of 2 Peter 2:1-19. What is the overriding point these two authors are trying to make? (Try to state this in two parts, contrasting the wicked and the righteous.)

Write in the verse numbers that refer to the examples given at the left. (Not every blank will be filled.)

Example	2 Peter 2:1-19	Jude 1:5-21
Angels		
The world in Noah's time		
Sodom and Gomorrah		
Some Israelites in the wilderness		
False teachers in N.T. times		

Which two examples in Jude 1:5-21 illustrate the possibility of being in favor with God at one time, but then being lost?

- a. _____ b. _____

Note: Jude tells how these false teachers "reject authority and speak evil of dignitaries." (1:8-9)

The example of Michael the archangel teaches that speaking against higher authorities is wrong, period. *Even the archangel of God* did not rebuke *even* Satan. Did Satan deserve a rebuke? Of course, but it was not Michael's place to give it. So he said, "The Lord rebuke you!" The false teachers were not so careful, and fell into this error. May *we*, in our pursuit of truth and righteousness, not get carried away by talking against others, especially those in authority.

Jude 1:11: Tell a basic characteristic, different for each one, of the following evil men:

- Cain –
 Balaam –
 Korah –

Note: The original account of his prophecies in favor of Israel is in Numbers 22-24. His greed is fairly apparent in the account and is the basis for his condemnation in 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 1:11. We learn, perhaps surprisingly, of wickedness that he perpetrated *against Israel* in Numbers 25:1-5 (understood in light of Numbers 31:16). This helps explain his fate in Numbers 31:8.

Jude 1:14-15: What is the theme of Enoch's prophecy?

- Did we know before reading Jude that Enoch was a prophet?
 What one word (or its variant) is repeated four times in his prophecy?
 How does this make sense, in light of what we know about the times in which he lived?

Jude 1:24: On the left, again list the three descriptions of Jude's audience from verse 1. Then match each to the related phrase on the right from verse 24.

a.	___ Able to keep you from stumbling
b.	___ (Able) to present you faultless
c.	___ (Able to present you) before the presence of His glory