



1st John – Pastor Jann T. Butler (Background)

The Time it was Written

The letters of 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John were written just before the apostle's death, marking the end of the generation of the last living eyewitnesses of the Life (Nature) of the Father as manifested through Christ on earth (A.D. 85–95).

The Main Theme

The Communion (Fellowship) of the life of the Father in the Body of Christ is developed through the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit in the heart of each born-again believer.

Purpose for Writing the Letter

The communion (fellowship) of the believer was deteriorating. Divisions were increasing, and young converts were being exposed to false teachings (doctrine). The commandments were being violated, and the Holy Commandment was being broken.

The role of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of many believers was being lost, replaced by the testimony of men as false teachers entered in. The influence of these teachers was actively dismantling the witness of Christ, which comes through the inward anointing (counsel—of the Holy Spirit). The combined effect of Judaism and the Gnosticism of the time led many to deny His deity—that He was conceived by God in the earth, fully man and fully God.

The Holy Spirit is the revealer of the Son of God – Jn. 14:16-21

The Holy Spirit gives every believer the ability to see clearly and to know the Father through the manifested Son of God in the earth. John also clearly exposes Satan's purpose against the Church—to destroy the witness of the Father's love given through His Son. John understood that if the witness of truth were destroyed within the Church, Satan's influence on a dying world would increase. Satan knows that if he can remove the "witness of truth," the credibility of the Church will be lost.

Our witness to each other is the means to win the lost

The Apostle John—who came to perceive with depth the person and character of God in the person of Jesus—teaches that if our fellowship with Him is approved, it is because the Holy Spirit has removed the darkness of sin from our walk with one another. This work is accomplished through the inward anointing provided by the Holy Spirit.

This takes place so that we do not stumble over one another, keeping us free from offense. If a person claims to have fellowship with Jesus yet stumbles and takes offense at his brother, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

The Holy Spirit works in our hearts to remove darkness so that we do not continue walking in darkness with one another. The result is that a person's witness is validated by whether their fellowship with Jesus is approved or disapproved.

If the fellowship is approved, it is because His very person, character, and nature—love—have been revealed to us. If the fellowship is disapproved, it is because we have not come to truly know Him in that love, for God is love.

Love is perfected in us in light of the coming judgment upon the world. That judgment has been established because the Father's love was given to mankind. First, it was given to spare from judgment those who come to know His love. Second, it was given so that, through us, it may be extended to a dying world without hope. Our love for one another becomes the demonstration of His love to them.