

# Scripture Consulting Essentials

October 19, 2020

## John's Little Children

According to writers in the second century AD, the apostle John lived until late in the first century.

### **II John 1.**

### **III John 1-5.**

The second epistle of John was written to the elect lady and her children. In both the second and third epistles of John, the writer is referred to as “the elder.” John was an elder, more mature in his understanding than those referred to as “children.”

The third epistle of John was written to an individual named “Gaius.” Verse 4 includes him as one of “my children” and one who was walking in the truth. It tells us that he was lovingly helpful to the itinerant strangers who visited.

### **I John 1:1-4:**

God had John write about the Word of life in his first epistle. According to verse 2, that life was manifested, and it was eternal life. John and others had heard it, they had seen it, they had looked upon it, and their hands had handled it. The life which had been manifested and which they had seen and heard was the gift of holy spirit that had first been poured out upon them on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. They were deeply involved in the Word of that eternal life.

God had John write about that eternal life so that the people to whom he was writing could have fellowship with John and his associates, who had fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. The Word of the eternal life and the walk of fellowship with God and His Son and the brothers in Christ are topics of concern in this epistle.

### **Verses 5-10.**

Properly punctuated, verse 7 would read: “But if we walk in the light, as he is, in the light we have fellowship . . . .”

Now, to whom was John writing about that Word of life and fellowship?

### **I John 2:1 and 2:**

God had John write to those called “little children.” As a matter of fact, they are referred to nine times in the epistle as “little children” (I John 2:1, 12, 13, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).

These people were not literally little children. It was a term used by an implied comparison to

refer to those who were young and growing in their understanding of the Word of God rather than those who were mature in the Word of God.

John had been with Jesus Christ during his earthly life and ministry, and he was present on the Day of Pentecost when the gift of holy spirit was first poured out upon the apostles. John had faithfully stood with God and with the Lord Jesus Christ since the beginning of the Church of God. He was an elder. However, the people to whom God had him write this epistle were new and immature, and there were many things for them to learn about the eternal life that had been made manifest to them.

### **Verses 12-14:**

Verse 13. Interlinear. Greek: *ton* = masculine or neuter article: Him Who is OR that which is. Compare with 1:1 (neuter relative pronoun – that which).

“I write unto you, little children”: Variant reading in most critical Greek texts = I wrote unto you, little children.

The primary recipients of this epistle are referred to as “little children.” Those called “fathers” and “young men” are also mentioned in this passage.

Those called “little children” were young and immature believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those called “fathers” were those who had been believers in the Lord Jesus Christ for a long time and who had known that which was from the beginning, even as the elder John.

Those called “young men” were those who had learned the Word of God and continued in it. Thus they were strong and had overcome the wicked one. Such fathers and young men were examples to those called “little children.” [Gaius, one of John’s children who was walking in the truth, might well fit into the category of young men.]

### **I Peter 5:1-3.**

### **I John 2:18-29.**

Verse 18. The epistle warned the little children who were learning about Jesus, the Christ, that there were many antichrists in those days who opposed what had been taught about the life they had in the true Christ. This is the first indication in this epistle of serious oppositions that existed in their times.

Verse 20. Unction: Greek: *chrisma* = anointing (also in verse 27); related adjective: *christos* = anointed, Christ, the anointed one; related verb: *chriō* = to anoint (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; II Corinthians 1:21; Hebrews 1:9). The anointing was by the spirit born within these little children, which was Christ in them.

Verse 23. Interlinear. The words in italic type are not from words in the Stephen’s Greek text, but all critical Greek texts have words that may be rendered so.

Verses 27. The anointing was what they had received in the new birth. They were born of spirit with Christ in them. Others were attempting to seduce or mislead them, but these young believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were encouraged to abide in what they had in Christ.

Verse 29. doeth: Greek: *poieō* = to do, to make (over 550 occurrences).

Ephesians 3:11: God’s eternal purpose, “which he did, accomplished, carried out, performed” in Christ Jesus our Lord. [September 21]

Matthew 7:15-20. “bringeth forth” five times.

In this context in I John, it means “to do, to perform, to produce, to practice, or to make a practice of.” Those who are born of God make a practice of righteousness. They produce righteousness.

### **I John 3:1.**

Interlinear. After sons [children] of God, all critical Greek texts add words that may be translated “and we are.”

### **Verse 2.**

The epistle told these new and immature believers that they are children of God now. They were born of God. They had received holy spirit.

### **Verses 7-10.**

Greek: *poieō* (to do, to perform, to produce, to practice, or to make a practice of) in verses 7 (doeth), 8 (committeth), 9 (doth commit), 10 (doeth).

The spirit born in these young believers was perfect. It gave them the ability to practice righteousness and love. It distinguished them from those who were children of the devil.

### **Verse 18.**

These little children were encouraged to love in practice.

### **I John 4:4.**

These little children had overcome those of the world because that which was born in them was greater than that which was in the world.

### **I John 5:13:**

Interlinear: Correctly translated, verse 13 should read: “I have written these *things* to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” These little children had already believed in the name of the Son of God. They were already saved and part of the Church of God. However, they may not have recognized that they already had eternal life and other things that Jesus Christ did for them. The epistle was written that they might know that they already had eternal life, which would have included all of the rights, privileges, and abilities that were part of that new life. They were born-again children of God who had overcome the world.

From what is written, we understand that God had John write to new and immature people who were part of the Church of God in order to help them in their understanding of and relationship with God and His Son Jesus Christ.

### **Verse 14 and 15.**

The new and immature believers in Jesus Christ needed to develop this kind of confidence. They needed to know that whatever they would ask of God according to His will, they would receive.

### **I John 5:21.**

Idolatry was at that time threatening the people who were new to Christianity, and God had John close the epistle with that warning. They were to keep themselves from idols.

Another warning was also given to these young believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in chapters 4 and 5.

### **I John 4:1-4.**

The epistle warns them of certain people who did not confess that Jesus had come in the flesh. There were false prophets who were communicating lies concerning Jesus Christ. They were confessing another Jesus, not the Jesus Christ that had been written about in the Scriptures and proclaimed by the apostles.

II John 7:

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

### **I John 5:1-6.**

Those who believe that Jesus is the Christ and that he is the Son of God are born of God and have overcome the world. He is Jesus, the Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of Mary by natural birth. He was flesh and blood. Although some people said that Jesus had not come in the flesh, the fact was that he had come in the flesh – by water and blood. These young believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were not to be persuaded by what others might say about Jesus Christ.

There were deceivers and antichrists who taught that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh. By the second century, there was a group known as Gnostics who said that Jesus had a body that was born of water but not blood. Some of them said that Jesus was a god who did not have a human body but that he had temporarily occupied a human body or that he simply appeared to people as a phantasm. They further said that his sufferings and death were mere appearances. We can see from the epistles of John that pagan philosophy was making inroads into Christianity in the latter part of the first century. These little children were to keep themselves from idols and the pagan philosophy associated with idolatry.

### **I John 1:1-4.**

Those who have believed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are born of spirit with eternal life. They have overcome the world by that new life.