

# THE JOHANNINE LETTERS

## ● 1. Who wrote the Johannine Letters?

1.1. Before examining the internal and external data relating to authorship of the Johannine Letters, it is necessary to investigate whether there is evidence that the Johannine Letters were written by the same author as the Gospel of John.

1.1.1. Both the Gospel of John and 1 John have the same simplified, repetitious and flowing Greek style and limited vocabulary. In both there is a relative absence of connectives used; in many cases sentences and clauses follow one another without the use of a connective. As in the gospel, in the Johannine letters the favored connectives are hoti (“that, because”) and kai (“and”). What do these data suggest about the authorship of 1 John?

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1.1.2. There are many conceptual parallels between the Johannine Letters and the Gospel of John; such parallels do not exist between the letters and other literary works, especially the synoptic gospels.

	Johannine Letters	Gospel of John
<b>Light</b>	1 John 1:5-6; 5:13	1:4-9; 3:19-21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9-10; 12:35-36, 46
<b>Darkness</b>	1 John 1:5-6; 2:8-9; 2:11	1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46
<b>Life</b>	1 John 1:2; 5:12	1:4; 5:26; 6:33, 35, 48; 8:12; 11:25; 14:6
<b>Truth</b>	1 John 1:6, 8; 2:21; 3:19; 4:6; 2 John 1, 4; 3 John 3	3:21; 14:6, 16-17; 15:26
<b>World</b>	1 John 2:15; 3:13; 4:4-5	14:17; 15:18-19; 16:8, 20 (Only a sample)

What do the conceptual parallels between the Johannine Letters and the Gospel of John imply about the authorship of the Johannine Letters?

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1.1.3. There are linguistic parallels between 1 John and the Gospel of John. The two works have many identical or nearly identical clauses and phrases. See *Appendix G: Parallels between 1 John and the Gospel of John*. What do the linguistic parallels between 1 John and the Gospel of John imply about the authorship of the Johannine Letters? (Keep in mind that whoever wrote 1 John also wrote 2 and 3 John, as will become evident.)

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1.1.4. Most of the linguistic parallels between 1 John and the Gospel of John occur in Jesus' discourses in the Gospel of John, so that the author of 1 John sounds like Jesus as portrayed in the Gospel of John. How could one explain this?

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## 1.2. 1 John

### 1.2.1. Internal evidence

A. There is no salutation in 1 John, so that the author does not identify himself at the beginning of the letter. What do you conclude about the author from the way that he addresses his readers in 1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 5:21?

B. What can you infer about the author from 1 John 1:1-3?

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If he was an eyewitness to events in Jesus’ ministry, could the author of 1 John also be the author of the Gospel of John (see John 19:35; 20:24)?

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C. The use of the first person plural in 1 John suggests that the author is writing representatively (see 1:1-5). Those included among the collective authorship of 1 John are other eyewitnesses. Who exactly they were, however, is unknown.

1.2.2. External evidence

The external evidence points to John the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the author of the Gospel of John, as the author of 1 John.

A. Irenaeus (130-200) cites 1 John as belonging to John the writer of the fourth gospel (the apostle) (*Adv. Haer.* 3.16.5, 8).

B. The Muratorian canon likewise cites 1 John as from the apostle John: “The Letter of Jude and two bearing the name of John are accepted in the universal church.” It is clear that one of these letters is 1 John, because the author quotes from 1 John 1:1, 3-4.

C. Clement of Alexandria (150-215) writes that 1 John is from John the apostle (*Strom.* 2.15.66; 3.4.32; 3.5.42, 44; 4.16.100)

D. Tertullian (160-225) also attributes 1 John to the apostle John (*Adv. Marc.* 5.16; *Adv. Prax.* 28; *Adv. Gnost.* 12).

1.2.3. Does the external evidence cohere with the internal evidence?

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### 1.3. 2 and 3 John

#### 1.3.1. Internal Evidence

A. Who was the author of 2 and 3 John according to 2 John 1 and 3 John 1?

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B. The term elder can mean an elder as a position in the church or an older man; it also seems also to be legitimate title for an apostle. Papias (as quoted by Eusebius in *H.E.* 3.39.4) refers to the apostles as elders, one of whom was John: “I inquired into the words of the elders, what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord’s disciples had said.” What relevance does this datum have for the question of the authorship of 2 and 3 John?

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#### 1.3.2. External evidence

External evidence is lacking for the authorship of 2 and 3 John, although, as was seen, the Muratorian canon makes reference to more than one epistle written by John, as does Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 2.15.66).

1.3.3. It should be pointed out that stylistically and conceptually 2 and 3 John are so close to 1 John that whatever you conclude about the latter will be true of the former.

1.4. What do you conclude about the author of 1 John, 2 John and 3 John?

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1.5. Some scholars hold that, in spite of the obvious similarities between them, there are enough vocabulary and stylistic differences between the Gospel of John and 1 John to postulate that the author of the latter was not the same as the former. Rather, the author of 1 John was actually a careful and successful imitator. This type of argument tends to be circular, and does not compel the conclusion that the author of 1 John was not the same as the author of the Gospel of John.

## 1.5.1. Vocabulary

A. 1 John omits significant words and phrases that occur in the Gospel of John.

1. Significant words that that occur in the Gospel of John but not in 1 John include:

“Glory” (doxa); to glorify (dozazô); “grace” (charis); “fullness” (plêroma); “heaven” (ouranos); “to rise” (anistêmi); resurrection (anastasis); “to raise up” (egeirô); “the dead” (hoi nekroi); “from above” (anôthen); “the earthly (or heavenly) things” (ta epigeia [epourania]); “to exalt” (hupsoô); “to destroy” (apollumi); “to save” (sôzô); “to work” (ergazomai) (but used 2 John 8; 3 John 5); “salvation” (sôtêria); “the one who sent” (ho pempas); “to judge” (krinô); “judgment” (krima); “to serve” (diakoneô); “to make visible” (emphanizô); “peace” (eirênê); to liberate (eleutheroô).

2. Significant phrases that that occur in the Gospel of John, but not in 1 John include:

“Kingdom of God” (basileia tou theou); “to see life” (horaô zôên); “the Holy Spirit” (to pneuma to hagion); “to be born from the Spirit” (gennaomai ek pneumatos); “from water and Spirit” (ex hudatos kai pneumatos); “to love the light / darkness” (agapaô to phôs / skotian); “to do evil” (phaula prassô); the wrath of God (hê orgê tou theou); “to worship in spirit and truth” (prosnunêô en pneumati kai alêtheia); “to honor the father / son” (timaô ton patera / huion); “to do the good” (poieô ta agatha); “resurrection of life / judgment” (anastasis zôês / kriseôs); “To witness to the truth” (martureô tê alêtheia); “to search the scriptures” (eraunaô tas graphas); “to die in sin(s)” (apothnêskô en hamartia[ais]); “words of God” (rêmata tou theou); “eternal life” (zôê aiônios); “light of the world” (phôs tou kosmou); light of life (phôs tês zôês); “to be from above (or below)” (einai ek tô anô [katô]); to remain in the word” (menô en tô logô); “to remain in the teaching” (menô en tê didachê); “the word finds room” (ho logos chôrei); “to become free” (eleutheros ginomai); “to see death” (theoreô thanaton); “to taste death” (geuomai thanatou); “the ruler of the / this world” (ho archôn tou / toutou kormou); “sons of light” (huioi tou phôtos); “the son in the father” or “the father in the son” (ho huios en tô patri or ho patêr en tô huiô); “to love / hate one’s life” (phileô / misô tèn psuchên); “to have peace” (echô eirênên); “to have the light” (echô to phôs); “to believe in the light” (pisteuô eis to phôs); “to prepare a place” (hetoimazô topon); “to ask in the name” (aitêô en to onomati); “to make a home with someone” (monên poieô para tini); “to bear fruit” (karpon pherô); “to make manifest the name” (phaneroô to onoma); “to be one” (hen eimi).

3. It is assumed that the author of 1 John would have used some of these omitted words and phrases, if he was the author of the Gospel of John. The fact that these words and phrases were omitted suggests the author of 1 John was not the same as the author of the Gospel of John, but was an imitator. This conclusion, however, does not necessarily follow. The absence of these words and phrases is not an indicator that the author of 1 John was different from that of the Gospel of John. Every text has unique words and phrases; only if it can be demonstrated that these words and phrases should have been in 1 John does their omission become evidence for an imitator, but this is not the case. Besides, the omitted phrases usually occur only once or twice in the Gospel of John and often variants of them are found in 1 John.

B. 1 John has words and phrases that are not found in the Gospel of John.

1. Significant words that occur in 1 John but not in the Gospel of John include:

“Fellowship” (*koinônia*); “message” (*aggelia*; *epaggelia*); “to give a message” (*epangellô*); “understanding” (*dianoia*); “stumbling block” (*skandalon*); “false prophets” (*pseudprophêtai*); “anti-christs” (*antichristoi*); “pride” (*alazoneia*); “life” (*bios*); “the anointing” (*to chrisma*); “to be ashamed” (*aischunomai*); “appearance” or “presence” (*parousia*); “hope” (*elpis*); “lawlessness” (*anomia*); “to condemn” (*kataginôskô*); “punishment” (*kolasis*); “atonement” (*hilasmos*).

2. Significant phrases that occur in 1 John but not in the Gospel of John include:

“To deceive oneself” (*heauton planaô*); “to confess sins” (*homologeô tas hamartias*); “love has been made perfect” (*hê agapê teteleiôtai*); “to know from something” (*ek tinos ginôskô*); “to love the world” (*agapaô ton kosmon*); “to deny the son” (*arneomai ton huion*); “to have the Father” (*echô ton patera*); “confidence before God” (*parrêsia pros ton theon*); “to destroy the works of the devil” (*luô ta erga tou diabolou*); “the seed of God (*to sperma tou theou*); “to remain in death” (*menô en tô thanatô*); “to believe in the name of the son” (*pisteuô tô onomati tou huiou*); “to do righteousness” (*poieô tên dikaiosunên*); “the spirit of deceit” (*to pneuma tês planês*); “to discern the spirits” (*dokimazô ta pneumata*); “to set our hearts at rest” (*peithô tas kardias hêmôn*); “the sin towards death” (*hamartia pros thanaton*); “to have the witness in oneself” (*echô tên marturian en heautô*).

3. Some scholars argue that the fact that so many significant words and phrases found in 1 John are absent from the Gospel of John suggests that the same author did not write both works. The assumption is that the author of 1 John would not have left so many significant words and phrases out of the Gospel of John, if he was its author. This argument, however, is by no means compelling. It is not the case that a single author must include his total linguistic range in every work that he writes. Only if it can be demonstrated that an author should have used words and phrases in 1 John absent from the Gospel of John when writing the latter does their omission become significant. But this is not the case.

C. It is argued that certain linguistic peculiarities suggest different authors for 1 John and the Gospel of John.

1. In 1 John 3:3 the construction “to have hope upon someone” (*echô elpida epi tini*) occurs, whereas the same idea is expressed in the Gospel of John by “to hope in someone” (*elpizô eis tina*) (5:45). It is argued that the same author would not use two different but synonymous constructions. There is no reason, however, to restrict an author to one expression, either “to have hope upon someone” or “to hope in someone.”

2. 1 John uses the preposition *apo* (with the meaning of “from”) with the verbs “to hear” (*akouô*), “to ask” (*aiteô*) and “to take” (*lambanô*) (*akouô* 1:5; *lambanô* 2:27; 3:22; *aiteô* 5:15). In the Gospel of John, on the other hand, the preposition *para* (also with the meaning of “from”) is used with the same verbs, and not *apo* (see *akouô* 1:40; 6:45; 7:51; 8:26, 38, 40; 15:15; *lambanô* 5:34, 41,

44; aitēō 4:9). The use of the different prepositions with the verbs “to hear,” “to ask” and “to take” in 1 John and the Gospel of John is interpreted to mean that the same author did not write both works, for it is assumed that an author would demonstrate a consistency of usage. This datum, however, is not as compelling as it may initially appear. First, the use of both prepositions (apo and para) with the verb “to hear” (akouō) occurs in Acts 9:13; 10:22, which proves that the same author can use both constructions. Second, the verb “to hear” and “to ask” with the preposition apo only occur once in 1 John, so that it is inaccurate to say that this construction is characteristic of the author. Besides the use of akouō + apo arguably has a different meaning in 1 John 1:5 than akouō + para: the use of apo may stress the ultimate source of what is being heard rather than the immediate source. Third, the construction lambanō (“to take”) + para occurs in 2 John, which, on the assumption that the same author wrote 1 John and 2 John, proves that the author of 1 John used both constructions. Fourth, 1 John and the Gospel of John share the more common construction of the verb + genitive of person, which suggests that the same author is responsible for both. In conclusion, this linguistic peculiarity lends little weight to the hypothesis that the author of 1 John is not also the author of the Gospel of John.

3. In 1 John, the verb “to know” (oida) with personal object does not occur (e.g. John 6:42; 7:27; 15:21). This omission, however, is probably accidental, because there was no opportunity to make use of this construction in 1 John.

### 1.5.2. Style

In spite of having the same simplified, repetitious and flowing Greek style and limited vocabulary, according to some scholars, certain stylistic traits reveal that the author of 1 John is not the same as the author of the Gospel of John. The author of 1 John never uses the construction men...de (“on the one hand...on the other hand”), which occurs in the Gospel of John (7:12; 10:41; 11:6; 16:9, 22; 19:24, 32; 20:30). Similarly, the particle oun (“therefore”) does not occur in 1 John, but is found in the Gospel of John. The word is found, however, in 3 John 8. The conjunctive particle commonly used to connect clauses in 1 John is kai (“and”). In one case in 1 John (5:15), the use of ean (“if”) with the indicative occurs, which is not found in the Gospel of John. Such stylistic variations are thought to point to the conclusion of a different author for 1 John than the author of the Gospel of John. Such minor stylistic differences, however, are probably not significant, but are better explained as only accidental variations of the same author.

It is also pointed out that 1 John contains no citations or allusions to the Old Testament, whereas the Gospel of John is replete with them. On this basis, it is argued that the same author could not have written both texts. The absence of citations or allusions to the Old Testament in 1 John, however, is probably a function of the author’s purpose, not his aversion to the Old Testament.

### 1.5.3. Conclusion

The argument from differences between Gospel of John and 1 John with respect to vocabulary and style tends to be circular, and does not compel the conclusion that the author of 1 John was not the same as the author of the Gospel of John. The similarities between the two texts by far outnumber the differences. In addition, one should not expect two texts by the same author to be identical in vocabulary and style.

## ● 2. To whom were the Johannine Letters written?

### 2.1. 1 John

2.1.1. There is no intended reader named in 1 John, since there is no salutation. The only indirect evidence for the identity of the intended readers is the admonition in 1 John 5:21: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” What does this suggest about the identity of the intended readers?

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2.1.2. Since the tradition places John in Ephesus later in his life, it is probable that John wrote 1 John for the Ephesian church and other churches in the vicinity (see Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.3.1). These churches were largely dominated by gentile believers.

### 2.2. 2 John

2.2.1. According to 2 John 1, who were the intended readers of 2 John?

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2.2.2. To whom or what could this refer?

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### 2.3. 3 John

2.3.1. According to 3 John 1, who was the intended reader?

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2.3.2. The name Gaius occurs several times in the New Testament: Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14. There seem to be two individuals with this name:

A. Acts 19:29; 20:4: an associate of Paul.

B. 1 Cor 1:14; Rom 16:23: a member of the Corinthian church

The Gaius referred to in 3 John could be one of these, or be a third Gaius.

### ● 3. *When were the Johannine Letters written?*

There is no internal or external evidence with which to date the letters. These letters were likely written after John took up residence in Ephesus, sometime after Paul's death.

### ● 4. *Where were the Johannine Letters written?*

Based on what is known of the life of John, where is it most probable that the Johannine Letters were written?

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### ● 5. *What are the Johannine Letters?*

#### 5.1. 1 John

5.1.1. 1 John does not conform to the standard Greco-Roman epistolary structure, since it lacks an introduction and conclusion; thus, it is probably not a genuine letter, but a theological treatise. The work contains both theological instruction and exhortation; the two literary forms are intermingled and interdependent. The ideas in this text are so blended that it is almost arbitrary at times to break the text into literary divisions.

#### 5.1.2. Outline of 1 John

A. 1:1-4: John begins by claiming eyewitness knowledge of Jesus, the word of life. He says that he writes in order that his hearers' joy may be complete.

B. 1:5-2:2: John affirms that, since God is light, if anyone walks in darkness while claiming to be in the light his claim to be in the light is proven to be a lie. But if he walks in the light, a person is cleansed from every sin. John adds that no one is sinless and that when a believer sins, he has an atonement for sin in Jesus Christ.

C. 2:3-17: John gives a test to his readers for them to be certain that they "know God" or are "in him": anyone who claims to know God keeps God's commands and anyone who claims to be in God lives as Christ lived. John reminds his readers of the new commandment that Christ gave, and affirms that the person who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is actually still in darkness. He also identifies three types of readers: children, fathers and young men. John then equates loving the world with not having the love of God in oneself.

D. 2:18-29: John says that this is the last time and warns that antichrists will arise, who have gone from his readers' community. The antichrist is the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. John exhorts his readers to dwell in Christ, adding that any man who does righteousness is born of him.

E. 3:1-24: John begins by affirming that God's love is so great that his readers can call themselves the sons of God, who have the hope of being like Christ. Those who have this hope purify themselves. He admonishes them not to be misled: only the man who does righteousness is righteous; a child of God does not commit sin. Rather, the man who sins is a child of the devil. He exhorts them to love another, and warns them to expect to be hated by the world. Again he tells them that the one who has crossed from death to life loves his brother; he adds that love must result in action. John also teaches that his readers can obtain from God whatever they ask. He concludes by saying that God's command is to believe in his son and love another. In so doing, Christ dwells in them.

F. 4:1-6: John contrasts the Spirit of God with other spirits that inspire false prophets and are of the world. The criterion to distinguish spirits is that the Spirit of God acknowledges Jesus as come in the flesh.

G. 4:7-21: John expounds more on the theme of love. He exhorts his readers to love another, says that God is love and the one who loves God is born of God and knows God. God showed his love by sending his son as an atonement for sin. He exhorts his readers to love one another and states that God dwells in them if they love. Further proof that God dwells in them and they in Him is that God has given them his Spirit. John re-affirms that he was an eyewitness to Jesus' life. John adds that the perfection of love is to have confidence on the day of judgment and there is no fear in love.

H. 5:1-5: John says that anyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; he adds that the one who loves God loves the children of God and keeps God's commands. The victory over the world is to believe that Jesus is the Christ.

I. 5:6-12: John describes Jesus as having come with water and blood, and speaks about the Spirit of truth as that which bears witness. This is the threefold testimony, which is really a single testimony; the testimony is that God has given eternal life and this life is in his son. The one who accepts God's testimony has eternal life, whereas the one who rejects it makes God out to be a liar.

J. 5:13-20: John says that he has written in order that they may know that they have eternal life; it is for those who believe in Jesus Christ. He says again that believers can receive from God whatever they ask. John advises his readers to restore anyone who commits any sin except the sin unto death, for which there is no restoration. He concludes by saying that he and his readers know three things: that the one born of God does not sin; that they are from God; and that the son of God has come and given understanding in order that they may know the truth.

5.2. 2 and 3 John are genuine letters conforming to the standard epistolary structure.

#### 5.2.1. Outline of the Second Letter of John

A. 1-3: This represents the introduction of the letter.

1. 1-2: This is the salutation of the letter.

2. 3: John gives a benediction, rather than prayer.

B. 4-11: This represents the main body of the letter.

1. 4-6: John reminds his readers to follow the commandment given by Jesus to love one another. The one who loves follows God's commands.

2. 7-11: John warns against false teachers, whom he calls deceivers, and says that they deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. John calls them antichrists, and instructs his readers to have no contact with these deceivers.

C. 12-13: John concludes his letter with his expression of his desire to visit them and instruct them further and with greetings.

#### 5.2.2. Outline of Third Letter of John

A. 1-2: This represents the salutation of the letter.

2. 3-12: This is the main body of the letter.

a. 3-8: John commends Gaius for his faithfulness and his hospitality to some visiting believers.

b. 9-10: John criticizes a certain Diotrophês, who slanders John and his associates.

c. 11-12: John commends a certain Demetrius.

3. 13-15: John concludes his letter by saying that he hopes to visit Gaius and instruct him further. He adds a benediction, followed by greetings.

## 6. *Why were the Johannine Letters written?*

### 6.1. 1 John

6.1.1. What are the three purposes for writing 1 John that John explicitly provides?

#### A. 1 John 1:3-4

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#### B. 1 John 2:1

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#### C. 1 John 5:13

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From these three statements of purpose, what do you conclude about John's purpose in writing?

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6.1.2. From the fact that, in 1 John 2:18-26, John warned against false teachers, what do you conclude about John's more specific purpose in writing?

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6.2. 2 John

From 2 John 5-6, 7-11, what do you conclude about the purpose of 2 John?

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6.3. 3 John

From its content, what do you conclude about the purpose of 3 John?

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6.4. John's Opponents

6.4.1. John had the false teachers and the challenge that they posed in mind when he wrote his three letters. What John wrote was largely in response to their aberrant theological views. Given this assumption, what further might you infer about the lives and teachings of these false teachers from the following passages that do not speak directly about these false teachers but probably have them in view?

A. 1 John 2:4; 4:8

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B. 1 John 4:20; 1:6; 2:6, 9

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C. 1 John 4:1-6

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D. 1 John 1:8, 10; 3:7, 10

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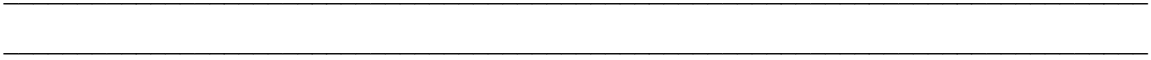
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E. 1 John 3:4; 2:4; 2 John 6

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F. 1 John 4:15; 5:5

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G. 1 John 4:2; 5:6; 2 John 7

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H. 1 John 2:9-11; 3:11, 14, 17; 4:8, 12

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6.4.2. Post-New Testament sources identify the false teacher Cerinthus as John's major opponent.

A. Irenaeus cited a tradition from Polycarp concerning the existence of a false teacher named Cerinthus in Ephesus at the time of John; John was supposed to have fled from a bath house when Cerinthus entered for fear that the roof would cave in under the judgment of God (*Adv. Haer.* 3.3.4; see Eusebius, *H.E.* 3. 28. 6; 4. 14. 6). Irenaeus gives this outline of Cerinthus' teaching:

“Cerinthus, again, a man who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians, taught that the world was not made by the primary God, but by a certain power far separated from him, and at a distance from that Principality who is supreme over the universe, and ignorant of him who is above all. He represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he was nevertheless more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Moreover, after his baptism, Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and that he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and that then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible, inasmuch as he was a spiritual being” (*Adv. Haer.* 1.26.1).

B. Hippolytus, in his work *Refutation of all Heresies*, twice provides an outline of the theological views of Cerinthus.

1. *Refut.* 7.21

“But a certain Cerinthus, himself being disciplined in the teaching of the Egyptians, asserted that the world was not made by the primal Deity, but by some virtue which was an

offshoot from that Power which is above all things, and which (yet) is ignorant of the God that is above all. And he supposed that Jesus was not generated from a virgin, but that he was born son of Joseph and Mary, just in a manner similar with the rest of men, and that (Jesus) was more just and more wise (than all the human race). And (Cerinthus alleges) that, after the baptism (of our Lord), Christ in form of a dove came down upon him, from that absolute sovereignty which is above all things. And then, (according to this heretic,) Jesus proceeded to preach the unknown Father, and in attestation (of his mission) to work miracles. It was, however, (the opinion of Cerinthus,) that ultimately Christ departed from Jesus, and that Jesus suffered and rose again; whereas that Christ, being spiritual, remained beyond the possibility of suffering.”

2. Refut. 10.17

“Cerinthus, however, himself having been trained in Egypt, determined that the world was not made by the first God, but by a certain angelic power. And this power was far separated and distant from that sovereignty which is above the entire circle of existence, and it knows not the God (that is) above all things. And he says that Jesus was not born of a virgin, but that he sprang from Joseph and Mary as their son, similar to the rest of men; and that He excelled in justice, and prudence, and understanding above all the rest of mankind. And Cerinthus maintains that, after Jesus’ baptism, Christ came down in the form of a dove upon Him from the sovereignty that is above the whole circle of existence, and that then He proceeded to preach the unknown Father, and to work miracles. And he asserts that, at the conclusion of the passion, Christ flew away from Jesus, but that Jesus suffered, and that Christ remained incapable of suffering, being a spirit of the Lord.”

Based on the description of his views provided by Irenaeus and Hippolytus, could Cerinthus have been one of those false teachers opposed by John in Ephesus? In other words, do their summaries of Cerinthus’ teaching resemble what was reconstructed to be the false teaching opposed by John in the Johannine Letters?

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C. Eusebius quotes from a Gaius who opposed Cerinthus (*H.E.* 3.28.1). Which significance may this fact have for identifying the false teachers alluded to in the Johannine Letters? (See 3 John 1.)

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