

1 John Section 1: Full-Scale Faith

1. John's emphasis (p. 2 of pdf "3D and agape graphs")

2.. The sweep of 1 John (in Byzantine Greek manuscripts)

		OPENING WORDS	THEMES
1	1:1-2:6	"That which was from the beginning ..."	Central Burden: God Is Light
2	2:7-2:17	"Beloved, I am writing to you ..."	Central Commandment: Embody the Age-Old Message
3	2:18-3:8	"Children, it is the last hour ..."	Key Counsel: Remain in His Anointing and Receive Eternal Life
4	3:9-4:6	"No one born of God makes a practice of sinning ..."	Central Warning: Beware Cain's Error and False Prophets
5	4:7-4:14	"Beloved, let us love one another ..."	Foundational Imperative: God's Love
6	4:15-5:15	"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God ..."	Necessary Instruction: Believing in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God
7	5:16-5:21	"If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death..."	Concluding Admonition: The True God and the Threat of Imposters

3. John's conception of the gospel identity (John 1:12–13)

John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

- Receiving Christ results from and in a staggering quality and quantity of divine love—see graph.
- Receiving Christ results in a dynamic three-fold balance—see p. 1 of pdf "3D and agape graphs"

1 John section 1: Central Burden: God Is Light (1:1–2:6)

A. Announcement of Authority and Purpose (1:1–4)

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the **Father** and was made manifest to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the **Father** and with his **Son Jesus Christ**.⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

1. The incarnation is true and real.
2. Eyewitnesses are sufficient proof (“by the mouth of two or three witnesses”)
3. The goal of the apostolic testimony is joyful fellowship, vertical and horizontal.

B. Main Burden of the Epistle: The Character of God (1:5)

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that **God** is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

There is a quality and activity of God with implications for the community John addresses.

C. Implications of God’s Character for the Christian Life (1:6–10)

1 John 1:6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.⁷ 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** cleanses us from all sin.⁸ If we say we have no sin, we

deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1. Vv. 6, 8, 10 imply a bogus confession of God (1:5). Much of 1 John deals with symptoms and underlying causes of this.
2. Vv. 7, 9 point the way toward true fellowship with God.

D. Appeal to Readers in the Light of God's Character (2:1–6)

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the **Father, Jesus Christ** the righteous.² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.³ And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.⁴ Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,⁵ but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of **God** is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

1. The (reasonable) goal is for believers not to sin. But there is a remedy if they do.
2. There is both a special grace and a common grace benefit to Christ's death.
3. Communion with God/Christ implies compliance with his will as expressed in commandments.
4. God love and Christian assurance are confirmed through living like Jesus did.