



Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New King James Version (NKJV), copyright © by Thomas Nelson, 1984.

Copyright © 2022 by Joshua R. Embry

All rights reserved

Structural Analysis of 1 John via Outline

- I. INTRODUCTION 1:0
 - 1. Unlike many other epistles, 1 John is missing a general greeting, neither identifying the author the intended audience at the onset. Instead it gets right into the content.
- II. THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING 1:1-5
 - A. That from the beginning
 - 1. We have heard, seen with our eyes, our hands have handled
 - 2. The Word of life
 - i. Was manifested (Christ)
 - ii. We have seen
 - iii. We bear witness and declare to you
 - iv. Eternal life
 - v. That you might have fellowship with us
 - vi. Our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Christ
 - B. We write these things to make your joy complete
 - C. This is the message we heard from Him
 - 1. From Christ
 - 2. This is the message we declare to you
 - 3. That God is light
 - i. In Him is no darkness at all.

The simplest message is that God is good, He is pure and good, He is light and offers us eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ. John and other believers have witnessed Christ, the living Word in the flesh and testify from their first-hand eyewitness accounts. They were around and saw Christ themselves and share in what they saw, heard, and touched themselves. Some of the younger and new believers may not have been born yet or may not have had the privilege to meet Jesus, so he shares his testimony for future generations.

- III. THE TEST OF SALVATION 1:6-2:14
 - A. If we are in darkness, we are not in Him 1:6-7
 - B. If we are in the light, we are in Him
 - C. Clarification that Salvation is not perfection (for now) 1:8-10
 - 1. We have sin, do not deceive yourself
 - 2. Confess your sins, He will forgive them
 - 3. If we claim to be sinless, we call Him a liar and prove His word is not in us.
 - D. Christ is our advocate with the Father 2:1-2
 - 1. If you sin, Jesus is your Advocate with the Father
 - E. Keeping Christ's commands shows you know Him 2:3-6
 - 1. Simply professing to know Him but not living out the faith makes you a liar
 - 2. Keeping His word shows the love of God is perfected in you and that you are in Him.
 - 3. You ought to walk as Jesus walked.
 - F. Hate is a sign of being in darkness, love is a sign of walking in the light 2:7-11
 - G. Children, Fathers, Young Men 2:12-14
 - 1. This portion reads like a limerick, poem, or perhaps early Christian Hymn with repetition
 - 2. Children – sins are forgiven/have known the Father
 - 3. Fathers – you have known Him who is from the beginning (repeats)
 - 4. Young Men – you have overcome the wicked one/are strong and the Word of God abides in you

Plainly put, John shares that if those who claim to be believers are still living wicked lives, thriving in darkness, they are not saved and not of God. There is a real difference between darkness and someone who is a believer who stumbles or makes a mistake. Someone walking in the daytime can trip or stumble if they lose their focus. Someone who lives full-time in darkness is another story completely. While as believers we are called to live holy lives, we are still imperfect until Christ's second coming – to drive this point home – John clarifies and shares that we still have sin we deal with and not to be deceived. If we claim we are sinless we are lying (that's a sin!) to ourselves and others. When we do make a mistake and sin, we are to ask God for forgiveness and rest assured that we will be forgiven. This differs from the unrepentant who do not care that they are living in sin and thrive in it, always seeking it out. Christ is the advocate for the believer. Living as Christ commands and having love for one another are both signs of repentance and salvation in Christ. Hatred is a sign of remaining in darkness.

- IV. DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD 2:15-17
 - A. If you love the world, the love of God is not in you 2:15
 - 1. The world and God are at odds with each other and cannot coexist
 - 2. All that is in the world is not of God 2:16
 - i. Lust of the flesh (moral)
 - ii. Lust of the eyes (covetousness)
 - iii. Pride of life
 - 3. The world is passing away 2:17
 - i. The world is temporary and destined for destruction
 - Nothing here will remain, wealth, a good name, a business, a legacy
 - Everything you build will come to nothing apart from God
 - ii. God is eternal and is our future – place your hope in Him

While this may seem like a small feature I felt it deserved its own section. All of man's efforts apart from God are futile. Building a legacy, saving the whales, building a business to pass on to your grandchildren, all may be good things, but in the end, none of them will remain. Only the work done with an eternal purpose will stand the test of time. While it is permissible to pursue such efforts and some are matters of proper stewardship (please understand I am not saying to go and kill all the whales), none of these should supplant God's commands for our lives or replace God's calling in the believer's life. If a believer has one unit of resource and has the option to fulfil God's command or to fulfill a worldly pursuit, that unit of resource should always be put towards God's command. If God has blessed a believer with excess where both His command and additional interests may be fulfilled then they may act within His permissive will. Keep in mind, God has only given each person so much time on this earth, and to waste even a moment could be costly for another. Time is the greatest resource He has gifted us with. Be wise stewards with it. The goal being to hear "Well done my good and faithful servant" in the end.

- V. FALSE TEACHERS VS CHILDREN OF GOD 2:18-4:6
 - A. Sign of the end times is the appearance of false teachers 2:18-19
 - 1. They went out from among us but were never really part of us
 - B. But you – have an anointing from the Holy One 2:20-21
 - 1. You know all things
 - 2. You already know the truth
 - C. Those who deny Jesus are not of God and have not the Father 2:22-23
 - D. Stick to what you have heard from the beginning 2:24-29
 - 1. Abide in the Son and the Father

2. The promise is eternal life
 3. I've written about false teachers but you are secure and anointed
 4. You have already been taught concerning this
 5. Abide in Him so you may be confident and not ashamed when he returns
 6. Be righteous as He is righteous
- E. We are children of God through His love 3:1-3
1. Through God's love we have become His children
 2. The world knows neither us nor Him
 3. We do not know all that this entails but do know that we are His children and when He is revealed we will be like Him (we can't grasp fully what this looks like)
 4. Everyone who has hope in Him purifies himself as God is pure
- F. Believers vs non-believers 3:4-15
1. Believers act in righteousness and love
 2. Non-believers are unrighteous and do not love.
 3. We are of God, they are of the devil.
 4. Just like Cain was not of God and murdered Abel, so too the world, who is not of God, hates you.
- G. Those who are His 3:16-24
1. As He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren
 2. Share your goods with the brethren in need.
 3. Express love in action not just in word
 - i. This serves as proof of our faith
 4. Have a clear conscience
 - i. By doing the work of love
 5. Keep His commandments
 - i. Believe in Jesus and love one another
 6. We abide in Him and He in us if we follow Him, His spirit is in us
- H. False teachers 4:1-6
1. Do not believe every spirit
 - i. Test them as many false spirits have gone out
 2. Every spirit that confesses Jesus is Lord is true
 3. Those that deny Jesus are false
 4. False teachers are of the world, so the world listens to them
 5. Those who are of God hear us (true teachers, because they are of God) – a contrast.

This section spends significant time contrasting true believers and those who are either false teachers or deceived into thinking they are believers. It also holds a warning to test the spirits, something that not everyone within the church is in the habit of doing at times. Not every Christian book on the shelf at the store is trustworthy. In rather harsh language a comparison is made between murderous Cain and righteous Abel, those who are true believers are righteous and known by God – accepted by Him as Abel was. Those who are not true believers hate believers because they are not accepted by God. John shares that in the same way Cain hated Abel, the world hates Christians because they are rejected by God while we are not. He also expresses that the message has not changed, it is unchanging and the same from the beginning, and tells the readers to hold fast to God and the message they already know. Beyond this to focus on love for one another and to avoid those that deny Jesus. A note on section E and the mention of not knowing all that this entails. This does not mean we do not know what to expect. We are told about eternal life and a right relationship with God, being united with Jesus and God in the end. Instead, this simply refers to our inability to completely grasp what our complete regenerate state will be like in God's presence until we are there – words cannot express.

VI.	LOVE	4:7-5:3
	A. Love one another for love is of God	4:7-17
	1. God loves us	
	2. Sent His son to cover our sins because of His love for us.	
	3. He loved us (first)	
	4. Since He loved us, we ought to love one another.	
	B. There is no fear in love	4:18
	C. We love Him because He first loved us	4:19
	D. Anyone who claims to love God but hates his brother is a liar	4:20-5:3a
	1. He is not of God (not loving his brother)	
	2. If you love God, you must also love your brother.	
	3. Whoever believes Jesus is the Christ is born of God.	
	4. Anyone who loves God loves believers	
	E. This is the love of God, that we obey Him.	5:3b

John shares that God first loved us, and this same love that He has for us – enough love to save us, should be the same love we share for other believers. There should be no fear in this love. Those who do not share in this love are not of God, those who harbor hate for others are not of God, this is a simple test for faith. Ultimately a believer will be obedient to God’s calling and have an outflowing of that same love that has been shown to them from God. This does not mean they will be perfect, a believe may still have moments of anger or moments of impatience with one another, but there will be an overarching love for one another, and a desire to be in a right relationship with one another that only a sincere love can accomplish. In contrast, a bitter hatred can never produce this kind of relationship and acts as proof of an unrepentant and unchanged heart.

VII.	WITNESS AND FAITH	5:4-19
	A. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world	5:4-6
	1. Our faith overcomes the world	
	2. He who believes that Jesus is the Son of God	
	i. Who came by water and blood	
	ii. The Spirit bears witness	
	B. The Three bear witness	5:7-8
	1. The Father, Word, and Holy Spirit – in heaven	
	i. The Three are One	
	2. The Spirit, water, and blood – on earth	
	i. All agree as one	
	C. It is not just man who is a witness to the Gospel, but God Himself.	5:9
	1. Those who reject the Gospel call God a liar	
	D. God Himself has testified concerning His Son	5:9-10
	E. God has given eternal life in His Son	
	F. He who has the Son has life	
	1. He who does not have the Son does not have life	
	G. I write to believers (those in the faith)	
	1. So that you may know (believe) that you have eternal life	
	2. Continue to believe in the Son of God (do not waiver in your faith)	
	H. Know and believe that He hears us	5:14-15
	1. If we ask according to His will, He hears us	
	2. We have the petition we have asked of Him	

G. Avoid sin and pray (in faith) for the brethren concerning sin not leading to death

1. Some sin leads to death 5:16-19

i. Presumably the sin of rejection Christ (the unpardonable sin)

Since Christ's sacrifice was enough to cover all sin, this logically leaves only the final sin of rejecting God's free gift of salvation as the only sin that remains without sacrifice – rejecting God outright by rejecting His Son.

Unlike man-made philosophies, God Himself bore witness to His redemptive plan through Christ as well as confirming Jesus as the Christ. Rejection of Jesus then is rejection of the truth God has professed, not just the word of man. Jesus is the only way to eternal life. John charges believers to continue in their faith, to believe on Jesus as the Son of God, and to pray in faith, knowing that when praying according to His will that they will be heard and answered. The final charge is to keep the faith and avoid sin.

VIII. CONCLUSION

5:20-21

A. Jesus has come and given us understanding to know Him

1. We know Him and are in Him who is true

i. Jesus Christ, the Son

ii. True God and eternal life

2. Keep yourselves from idols. Amen

John ends with a reminder that Jesus has given believers understanding and the ability to know Him. Furthermore, we not only know Him but He is true. With what space is left, John reminds his readers to avoid idols and ends his letter.