

A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You I John

“A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You,” the books of the New Testament. That's what we've been studying in our broadcast series, the books of the New Testament. Today, we're going to look in I John. This is study number 23 in our series, “A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You.” Now, I want to remind you, we're not going into an in-depth study of these books. Rather, my goal is to give you a bird's-eye view of the books of the New Testament. And of course, number 23, I John, the twenty-third book of the New Testament.

Well, today we want to start by looking at the background, some of the background on this book, and of course, the author was John, the son of Zebedee, the apostle whom Christ loved in a special way, according to John chapter 19, verses 26-27. We can also look at II John 1 and III John 1 to see about this apostle, that he was the writer of the books of I, II, and III John.

Now, John was the last apostle alive and wrote to combat the heresy teachings of a group called the Gnostics, which spread false doctrine. Say, we have some of those people around today, don't we. John writes to set the record straight as he walked and talked with Jesus for years. Thus, he could refute false teaching with eyewitness accounts. He was with the Lord. He saw what was going on and he was a witness to what the Lord had done while being on this earth. And John writes to combat this heresy and the heresy about the false teachers and he was teaching about love here and to provide assurance of salvation.

Well, the date of this writing was about A.D. 90-95, and it was before the persecution of Domitian, the Roman emperor. The setting as we look at this was written to beloved brethren whom John knew personally and probably from Ephesus where John had worked after leaving Jerusalem. The exact audience is not known.

But the key verses here...and once again, there could be several, but I would call your attention first of all to I John chapter 1, verses 3-4. ³*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* ⁴*And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

And then in I John chapter 5, verses 11-13, it says, ¹¹*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹²*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.* ¹³*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

We find that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, according to the Scriptures, and the Scriptures is what leads us. The Holy Spirit leads us through the Word of God, and faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. A person is saved after they hear the Word of God. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, the Scripture says. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. The Scripture says that. And as a person hears that and the Holy Spirit works within their heart, they have a decision to make whether or not to trust Jesus as their Savior. And I pray that you've done that today. And as I John chapter 5, verse 11, says, *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* Trust Him today as your Savior. If you're never done that, ask Him to come into your heart.

Well, what about the purpose of the book of I John? We read in I John chapter 1 and verse 3 that it is to establish fellowship based upon Jesus Christ. He says there, *That which we have seen and*

heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Not only was John saying that you could have fellowship with other believers, but you can have fellowship with the Father, God the Father, and that you can have fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ. When we trust Christ as our Savior, we can have fellowship with others, with other people who have trusted Jesus. We can have fellowship with God our Father after we've trusted Jesus Christ, and we can have fellowship with our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Another thing that we see as a purpose here is that joy can be realized to its fullest, and we've already read this. He says in I John 1:4, *And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.* You want to be happy? Trust Jesus as your Savior. You want to be happy as a Christian? Get into His Word. Read His Word, *These things have I written unto you....* These things were written that our joy could be full as Christians.

Well, the theme of the book here seems to be fellowship, according to I John chapter 1, verses 5-7. We read first of all, once again, that John declares unto us that we may have fellowship with them, with the Father and the Son, and that fellowship is with God and His Son, according to I John chapter 1 and verse 3. Walking in the light is something that produces fellowship. Walking in the light produces fellowship with fellow believers, according to I John 1:7. It says, *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

Well, what about a hindrance to fellowship? There are hindrances, and as we read in I John chapter 2, verses 15-17, the love of the world can be a hindrance to fellowship. It says there in I John 2, verses 15-17, ¹⁵*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the*

lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷*And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

It's not putting a condition on salvation here. We know that we're saved by grace through faith, that not of ourselves, it's a gift of God, according to Ephesians 2, verses 8-9. What it's talking about here is, don't set your affections on the things of this world. They're going to pass away. We need to set our affections on the Lord, keep our eyes upon the Lord, and then we can have fellowship with other believers, the Lord Himself and with the Father. Don't get your mind and your eyes upon the things of this world, but keep your mind and your affections upon the things of God.

Well, another hindrance would be believing those who deny the deity of the Father and the Son. And I John chapter 2, verse 22, says, *Who is a liar...* it's talking about those who teach against the deity of the Father and the Son... *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

In I John chapter 4, verses 1-3, it says, ¹*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* Warnings here about hindrances to fellowship. Warnings about getting away from the true teachings of the Word of God. You want to be strong in the Lord? Stay in His Word. Study His Word, and let the Word of God dwell in you richly, the Scriptures say. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly. That means study the Word of God and let the power of God come into your life and lead you, and the Word of God will lead you into all truth.

Well, the practice of sin can also be a hindrance to fellowship. In I John chapter 3 and verse 4, it says, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law...* that can separate us from fellowship, not salvation, but

from fellowship. Verse 7 says, *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

Now, notice verse 10. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* When you see a person who says, "I'm a Christian," and they're living like the devil and they're living for the devil, then naturally we look at that person and say, "Well if that person's saved, then, this is ..." Now, I'm speaking of a person who's not saved. They look at a person who says, "I'm saved," and they're living like the devil, well, this person who's not saved can look at a person like that and say, "Well, if this person's saved, I'm as good as they are; I'm going to Heaven too."

But remember this, no one's going to Heaven apart from trusting Jesus as Savior. We must trust Him. We must ask Him to come into our heart and receive Him as our Savior.

And then we see another hindrance is the behavior of fellowship. One thing that we see here... well, actually the theme of the book is fellowship, and one of the behaviors of fellowship is this, that love's in deed and in truth. This is the behavior of a Christian. We love in deed and in truth, according to I John chapter 3, verses 13-18. The Christian who is walking in fellowship has assurance of salvation.

Notice in I John chapter 3, verses 18-23, ¹⁸*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.* ¹⁹*And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* ²⁰*For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.* ²¹*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.* ²²*And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.* ²³*And this is his*

commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

We have assurance of salvation today because we have trusted Christ. We haven't trusted ourselves to go to Heaven, but we trust Jesus to take us to our heavenly home. And we see that confidence is produced, according to I John chapter 3 verses 21-24. The Christian has confidence. And God's love in us produces love, according to I John chapter 4, verses 7-11, and the Christian who is walking in fellowship with the Lord has no fear.

First John 4:18 says, *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.* How do you have this love? You trust Jesus as your Savior. You ask Him to come into your heart. Receive Him as Lord and Savior and then, as a Christian, you stay in His Word and you let the Word of God guide you and direct you.

Applications here and the lesson that we see is, first of all, assurance of salvation, and we've talked about that. We've touched on that, I John 5:13, and it says there, *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

Have you trusted Him as your Savior? Do you know Him today? If not, ask Him to come into your heart right now. "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior." If you'll ask Him to save you today, He'll save you. He'll come into your heart and make it possible for you to have fellowship and go to Heaven.

If you are saved and you've trusted Him as your Savior, maybe you do not have the assurance of salvation. Remember this, God has written His Word that not only leads us to Christ, but it helps us to understand that we are secure in Christ. And I John is one of those books that gives us that

assurance. Get in His Word. Study the Word of God. Let Him lead you and guide you. We're saved by faith through grace and that not of ourselves. By grace through faith. It's a gift of God. Remember that. We've done nothing. It's all up to the Lord.

It's been good being with you today. Look at our website this week, www.LRWM.org.

Until the next time when you hear me say, "It is a good life," may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.