

# The Letters of John



Class I – I<sup>st</sup> John Intro

# What Is So Great About John's Letters?

- ❖ John's letters are the easiest to read of all the books in the entire Bible.
- ❖ John's letters also say some of the most profound things in the entire Bible.
- ❖ John is short, sweet, and to the point.
- ❖ In all your Bible, you will not find more rewarding and more powerful writing than these few short pages.

First Letter



This letter deals with Gnosticism and is written to the whole body of Christians

Second Letter



This letter deals with truth and is written to one family or congregation

Third Letter



This letter addresses battles for power within the church

# WHAT IS GNOSTICISM?

There are **TWO** things you need to know about Gnosticism:

1. Gnostics believe **knowledge** is what is the most important.

2. Gnostics **separate** heavenly things from physical things



# WHAT IS GNOSTICISM?

I. Gnostics believe **knowledge** is what is the most important.

Gnosis = knowledge

The Gnostics believed that **the mind and intellectual abilities** were the only important part of us.

They believed that gospel was good, but they felt they understood the gospel **better than the apostles**.

They believed it was foolish to consider the events of Jesus' life as **literal** – the Bible was meant to be **looked at figuratively**.

To be a **philosopher** was the goal and the sign of true enlightenment.

# WHAT IS GNOSTICISM?

2. Gnostics **separate** heavenly things from physical things

**THINGS IN HEAVEN  
ARE ALWAYS GOOD**

God

Angels

Soul

**THINGS ON EARTH  
ARE ALWAYS EVIL**

Our bodies

Our physical  
choices

Whether  
good or bad!

When you combine these two things  
you come up with two **BIG** conclusions.

1. God didn't really come down to earth and live as a man because the earth is evil and God can't be around evil things.
2. Since sins don't matter, we might as well do whatever we want to do, especially if it helps us to increase our "education".

# Gnostics separate the mind from the body

1<sup>st</sup> John says you can't separate  
them!

What we experience affects what we think!

What we think affects what we do!



How closely is your mind tied to your body?

How much do your thoughts have to do with your actions?

How closely knit is your body to your soul?

And the king said to me, Why is your **face sad**, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but **sadness of the heart**. (Neh 2:2)

A **glad heart** makes a **cheerful face**, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed. (Pr 15:13)

Do you not see that whatever **goes into the mouth** passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what **comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart**, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone. (Matt 15:17-20)

Therefore **by their fruits you shall know them**. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matt 7:20-21)

For as the **body apart from the spirit is dead**, even so faith apart from works is dead. (Jas 2:26)